

THE
17
GROUNDS OF SECESSION

FROM THE

M. E. CHURCH:

BEING

AN EXAMINATION OF HER CONNECTION WITH SLAVERY,
AND ALSO OF HER FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

BY REV. O. SCOTT.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The following Tract contains

1. The first two secession documents under the Wesleyan movement. They are given as a *sample* of the views of Wesleyans generally.

2. It contains a Treatise on the connection of the M. E. Church with Slavery, and the duty of seceding from pro-slavery churches.

3. A Treatise on the Methodist Episcopal form of Church Government.

4. The present position of the M. E. Church with regard to slavery.

The question of secession, so far as slavery is concerned, is applicable alike to the members of all *pro-slavery churches*.

In compiling this Tract, the author is indebted to several distinguished writers. He does not, of course, make large pretensions to originality.

It is commended to the candid attention and careful reading of all professing christians.

THE AUTHOR.

JANUARY, 1846.

THE
GROUNDS OF SECESSION

FROM THE
M. E. CHURCH.

WITHDRAWAL OF JOTHAM HORTON, ORANGE SCOTT,
AND LARROY SUNDERLAND.

WITH the date of this communication closes our connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. We take this step after years of consideration, and with a solemn sense of our responsibility to God—we take it with a view to his glory and the salvation of souls.

Twenty years and upwards of the best part of our lives has been spent in the service of this church—during which time we have formed acquaintances which have endeared to our hearts multitudes of Christian friends. Many of these are true kindred spirits, and we leave them with reluctance. But the view we take of our responsibility is not local in its bearings, nor limited in its duration. While we live, and when we die, we wish to bear a testimony which shall run parallel with coming ages; nay, with the annals of eternity. Many considerations of friendship as well as our temporal interests, bind us to the church of our early choice. But for the sake of a high and holy cause, we *can* forego all these. We wish to live not for ourselves, nor for the present age alone, but for all coming time; nay, *for God and eternity*. We have borne our testimony a long time against what we considered wrong in the M. E. Church. We have waited, prayed, and hoped, until there is no longer any ground for hope. Hence we have come to the deliberate conclusion that we must submit to things as they are, or peaceably retire. We have unhesitatingly chosen the latter.

It is, however, proper, in leaving the church, to assign our reasons. These are mainly, the following:

1. The M. E. Church, is not only a slave-holding, but a *slavery-defending church*.
2. The Government of the M. E. Church contains principles

not laid down in the Scriptures, nor recognized in the usages of the primitive church—principles which are subversive of the rights, both of ministers and laymen.

That the M. E. Church is a slaveholding church, none will deny. She allows her members and ministers *unrebuked*, to hold innocent human beings in a state of hopeless bondage—nay, more, she upholds and defends her communicants in this abominable business! All her disciplinary regulations which present a *show* of opposition to slavery are known and acknowledged to be a dead letter in the South. And they are as dead in the North as in the South. Even the general rule has been altered, either through carelessness or design, so as to favor the internal slave trade; and yet the last General Conference REFUSED to correct the error, *knowing it to be such!*

This church has defended, in a labored argument, through some of her best ministers, the *present rightful relation of master and slave*—in that she has never called them to account for putting forth such a document.

She has exhorted, through her regularly constituted agents and highest officers, the trustees of Methodist churches, to close their pulpits against Methodist anti-slavery lecturers.

She has refused, in numerous instances, through her bishops, to entertain, in the annual conferences, motions expressive of the sinfulness of slaveholding—motions for the appointment of committees on slavery—motions for the adoption of reports on slavery; and that, because those motions and reports contained the sentiment, that *slaveholding is sin*—which, it was alleged, is contrary to Methodism, which recognizes and approves of the relation of master and slave under some circumstances.

She has refused, through her bishops, to *hear* the prayers of scores and hundreds of her members *against* slavery, in some of the annual conferences.

She has refused to publish, in her official papers, several addresses of the British Wesleyan Conference, because they alluded to slavery.

She has arraigned and condemned, without the forms of trial, members of her highest ecclesiastical assembly, for simply attending and speaking in an anti-slavery meeting.

She has condemned modern abolition, refusing at the same time, to say, in the language of the discipline, that she is as “much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery.”

She has exhorted her ministers and members throughout the country “wholly to refrain” from this agitating subject.

She has said, through some of her annual conferences, that slavery is NOT a moral evil—while she has repeatedly refused, through her bishops, to allow other annual conferences to express the opposite sentiment.

She has allowed, without censure, one of her bishops to issue

a labored address, in which an attempt is made to prove that slaveholding is not only justified, but enjoined under some circumstances, by the Golden Rule ! and she has published this address in her official papers.

She has, through her ministers and members, disfranchised and censured or expelled, class-leaders, stewards, exhorters, and local preachers, for the simple crime of their abolition movements.

She has, through some of her annual conferences, prohibited her ministers and preachers from patronizing anti-slavery papers.

She has refused to receive into some of her annual conferences, pious and talented young men on trial, for the simple reason, that they were *active* abolitionists.

She has, through the same medium, arraigned, censured, suspended, and in some instances expelled her ministers, for contumacy and insubordination with respect to abolition ;—and some of these she has followed from year to year, by her bishops and members of other conferences for the evident purpose of destroying their ministerial character and influence ;—subjecting them to repeated, vexatious and expensive trials.

She has two or three times altered her discipline to effect, as is believed, their expulsion.

She has removed Presiding Elders from their districts for their abolition movements ; suffering, as it would seem, *this crime* to effect the appointment of other ministers and preachers.

She has refused, in her General Conference capacity, to re-affirm her former language of opposition to slavery, though requested to do this by some thousands of her ministers and members. She has refused, in the same capacity, to take exceptions to the sentiment of two or three annual conferences, who have said that slavery is not a moral evil.

And finally, she has adopted a resolution on colored testimony, which disfranchises *eighty thousand of her members*—thus giving the weight of her influence to that slaveholding legislation which, in a civil point of view, disfranchises millions of our fellow countrymen.

Add to this, the fact that all her official papers, are so much under the influence of slaveholding, that no abolitionist can be heard on the subject of slavery and abolition, however he may be abused, traduced and misrepresented.

In view of these facts we ask, is not the M. E. Church one of the main supporters of slavery in this country ? Has she not defended it in almost every conceivable way ? And is there any prospect that this church will ever be reformed, so long as slavery exists in the country ? If not, can we obey the commands of God, and continue in fellowship with a church which receives, shields, and defends, thousands and tens of thousands, who, according to Mr. Wesley, are “ exactly on a level with men-stealers ? ” If a large portion of our ministers and members were sheep-steal-

ers or horse-stealers, there would be more propriety in covering them ;—but when we consider that they make merchandize of the souls and bodies of *men*, or do that which is tantamount to such a traffic, without rebuke,—how can we co-operate with them in the great work of reforming the world ? Others must judge for themselves, but we feel it our duty to “come out of her”—to “have no fellowship” or connection “with the unfruitful works of darkness,” but to come out from among them and be separate!” By this course we solemnly believe, we can do more for the cause of the bleeding slave, than by continuing in a SLAVERY-DEFENDING church, when there *can* be no hope of reforming her till the country is reformed. But,

2dly, The Government of the M. E. Church contains principles not laid down in the Scriptures, nor recognized in the usages of the primitive church—principles which are subversive of the rights both of ministers and laymen.

While we admit that no *form* of church government is laid down in the Scriptures, we contend that *principles* are laid down which are in direct contravention with some of the existing forms.

That the Roman Catholic is of this class, all will admit. The claims of the high churchmen are believed to be equally unfounded. And though the objectionable features in the M. E. form of church government are less wide of the mark, yet they are as *truly* unauthorized as anything in either of the above mentioned forms. Both Scripture and primitive usage recognize christians in the light of one great brotherhood—possessing essentially the same rights, subject only to one master. True, pastors and people, have their peculiar and distinctive duties, but there is to be no “*lording it over God’s heritage.*”

From the Scriptures it is evident, that even in the times of the apostles, laymen were members of the highest councils of the church, and Lord King clearly proves that this was the usage of the christian church for several ages. It follows, therefore, that the contrary practice is not only without scripture and usage, but contrary thereto. That separation between ministers and laymen which exists in the M. E. church, owes its origin to the assumptions of Rome ! It exists, we believe in no other church. Even the Episcopalian church in this country cannot elect a bishop *without the concurrence of a board of laymen !*

The power which our bishops claim and exercise in the annual conferences is contrary to the plainest principles of christian responsibility. All religious associations must, in the nature of things, have the right to express, without restraint, their opinions on any moral question. But this no annual or quarterly conference in the M. E. church can do without the consent of the bishop or presiding elder. But no body of christian men has any more right to submit to such restraints, than they have to commit the entire keeping of their consciences to other hands. That holy

men of God should consent, in this enlightened age, to exercise such power over the consciences of their brethren, is truly astonishing! but not more so than that ministers can be found who will peaceably submit to such innovations upon their responsibilities to God!!

Scarcely less objectionable, is the power conferred upon the bishops of the M. E. church, in the appointment of the preachers. That the entire destinies of three or four thousand men should be in the hands of some five or six bishops, so far as their fields of labor are concerned, seems to be forbidden by the fact that these bishops are fallible men—that they are often ignorant both of the preachers and people; and that they cannot control the openings of providence, and the calls of God. We know the presiding elders are usually called upon for advice in this matter; but there is no OBLIGATION on the part of the Episcopacy to advise with any one. And when all must admit that it would be dangerous for the bishops to exercise the power they possess, what advantage can there be in their possessing such power? If it be wrong to rob our fellow creatures, how *can* it be right to possess the *legal power* to do this? But that the bishops will ever be curtailed in their prerogatives, in this respect, there is not the least ground of hope, when it is considered, that after those in the general conference who were in favor of some reform in this respect, had toiled for *thirty* years, namely, from 1790 to 1820, and when, having finally succeeded in carrying a small compromise measure, by a vote of more than two-thirds of the general conference, the whole measure was defeated by the minority, including two bishops—though one was but a bishop elect. This measure only provided that when presiding elders were wanted, the bishop should nominate three times the number wanted, out of whom the conference should elect the requisite number:—and the presiding elders thus constituted, were to be made an *advisory* council in stationing the preachers. This was not what a large portion of the general conference wanted, but what they consented to take, as a compromise measure. But Episcopacy **WOULD NOT** be curtailed in this respect. And yet some of our friends talk about reforming the church, in her government. Impossible! This can never be done. History and facts are all against the indulgence of such a hope. Could we see the most distant prospect of any material change for the better, we would wait and patiently labor. We say now, as we have often said, that reform and not revolution, is our wish. But no important church reform ever yet took place *in the entire body*, though by secessions, the monster, power, has been checked in his progressive career. What would the state of the world now have been, with respect to popery, had it not been for Luther and the Reformation? Who can tell to what lengths tyranny would have been carried ere this, had there been no opposition? no secession?

If the presiding elders were a legal council to station the preach-

ers, the case would be bettered but little, in some respects at least, inasmuch as they are created by the bishop alone, and entirely dependent on him for their office. They, therefore, would be mere echoes of his will.

Connected with this unrestricted stationing authority, which the bishop possesses, is the power to transfer preachers to any part of the United States, to Texas, or to Africa—and that too, not only without their consent, but *against their will* ! Thus, for instance, for the simple crime of abolition, a brother may be placed by the bishop where, in all probability, he would be put either out of the church, or out of the world. For, he may be transferred to a southern conference, to which, if he does not go, he would lose his membership in the church ; and where, if he does go, he would be *liable* to lose his head. It is not enough to say, in reply to this, that there is no probability that this power will ever be exercised, because its exercise would be wrong ;—for how can it be right to *possess* this power, if it would be wrong to exercise it ? And besides, when a majority of an annual conference becomes, in the judgment of the bishop, heterodox, how can it be known that the members will not be distributed where they will lose, to say the least, their membership ? Has not the possibility if not the probability of such a result already been more than intimated from the highest authority ?

Another serious objection to Methodist Episcopacy, is the election of bishops for life. Once a bishop always a bishop, however incapacitated to the performance of the duties of the office from bodily or mental infirmities.

We will mention but one thing more. And that is that feature in the economy of the M. E. church which gives the power to the preacher of excluding almost any member *he* may wish to get rid of. True, the Discipline requires the forms of trial, in case of expulsion ; but as the preacher has the sole power to appoint the committee, and that without giving the accused any right of challenge, it is not, in general, difficult, for a preacher to punish whom he pleases, and that for trifling causes, as many can testify. And as he has the sole right to appoint all the leaders and nominate all the stewards, it is of but little consequence for an expelled member to appeal to a quarterly meeting conference, if the preacher is known to be strongly prejudiced against him—however unfounded that prejudice may be.

Such, in brief, are some of our reasons for leaving the Methodist *Episcopal* Church.

We wish it to be distinctly understood, that we do not withdraw from anything essential to *pure Wesleyan Methodism*. We only dissolve our connection with Episcopacy and Slavery. These we believe to be anti-scriptural, and well calculated to sustain each other.

There are many valuable things in the economy of Methodism ;

these we shall still adhere to. And this we *can* do without having any connection with what is worse than objectionable. We know it will be said, God has greatly blessed the church, and is evidently still owning her, and therefore we ought not to disturb her peace by any discussions of her polity. The same remark may be made in regard to slavery. And yet who will pretend either that slavery is right because God has so wonderfully blessed the church, or that for this reason we should refrain from agitating her with discussions on the subject? We ask *who*? for we all know that *anti-abolitionists have* used this very argument. Abolitionists, however, have considered it unsound. Let them, then, be careful how they take precisely the same ground in relation to another matter. True, God has blessed us; but this is not perhaps so much owing to our slavery and Episcopacy, as to the evangelical character of our doctrines and our zeal. And let us not forget that he has blessed other churches too.

Should it be said that God has frowned upon all who have left the church,—it might be replied, in the first place, that this is not the fact. Some of the secessions from the church are prospering as well, in proportion to their means, as the M. E. church. And secondly, if it were true, it would not prove that the *act* of their leaving the church was displeasing to God—much less would it prove that no circumstances *can* exist which will make a secession justifiable.

Though we entertain none other but kind feelings towards those we leave, yet we expect to be ill-treated by our former friends. We know how it has been with others who have left. To lose ministers and members is a mortification to sectarian pride. Those who will *defend* the church and her usages, are fine fellows; but the moment they leave her communion, no reproachful epithets are too bad to heap upon them. Their motives are impugned, and their honesty questioned. And this, for effect, is sometimes done in *advance*! But we have counted the cost, and are prepared to suffer persecution. By whatever spirit some of our opponents may be actuated, we hope to be saved from all unkind expressions.

Though but three of us sign this document, scores, if not hundreds, to our certain knowledge, might have easily been obtained. We did not wish any other names *now*. There will be an opportunity for all who may desire it, to follow our example. We shall not be disappointed if but few do this. We have no anxiety on this ground. We act for ourselves. Knowing, however, that there are hundreds, if not thousands, who entertain the same sentiments we do, we have prepared an outline of discipline or plan of operation—a summary of which will be given in the paper containing this withdrawal. The entire plan will soon be published. It will be seen from the summary, that we have made provision to organize churches, if there is a call for it.

And now dear brethren of the M. E. church, we bid you FARE-

WELL. Many of you we know and love. And while we do not impeach your motives or honesty, we hope in turn you will not treat us as barbarians. There is room enough for us all. Let us have no *unchristian* contention.

JOTHAM HORTON,
ORANGE SCOTT,
LAROY SUNDERLAND.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Nov. 8, 1842.

WITHDRAWAL OF REV. LUTHER LEE.

By this article, and from its date, I withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. I have been a member of her communion more than twenty-one years, rising of sixteen of which have been spent in the ministry; with what success others must judge, subject to the corrections of the last judgment in the light of eternity.

The first and leading cause which has forced my mind to this conclusion, is the relation which the church sustains to slavery.

1. There is no rule in the Discipline of the church prohibiting the private members of the church holding slaves; but, on the contrary, the legislation of the church supposes that they do and will continue to hold slaves. It is said, in the section concerning slavery, "All our preachers shall *prudently* enforce upon *our members* the necessity of teaching *their slaves* to read the word of God." This every one knows must be a dead letter, as the laws of the slaveholding States forbid the teaching of slaves to read, while it proves that "our members" do and are expected to hold slaves.

2. The church has made herself responsible for the existence of slavery, by silently passing over the acts, without reproof, of those ministers and conferences which have openly and shamelessly justified slavery as a system. I will give but two of these instances out of many.

The following is from an address delivered before several conferences by Bishop Hedding:—

"The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

The Georgia Conference passed the following resolution:—

"*Resolved*, That slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil."

The South Carolina Conference passed a resolution of similar import.

There is then but one question to settle, and that is, Is the Methodist Episcopal Church responsible for these sentiments? That slavery has been sanctioned by individual ministers and con-

stitutional bodies of the church, has been clearly shown ; but has the church so endorsed these proceedings as to make herself responsible for them ? It is clear to me that she has.

(1.) These persons have never been dealt with for these sentiments, as persons have who have held and advanced other erroneous and wicked doctrines.

(2.) The Bishops have never remonstrated against the course of those conferences which have neglected to call these advocates of slavery to an account ; nor have they even attempted to transfer these men to other conferences to be dealt with, which they claim the power and right to do ; but on the other hand, they put the resolutions by which the conferences pronounced slavery to be right, which they claim not to be legally bound to put, and for the sentiments of which resolutions they say they are responsible to the General Conference. When they have been urged to put abolition resolutions, they have declined on the ground that they were responsible to the General Conference for the resolutions they put ;—and hence they must be responsible for pro-slavery resolutions.

(3.) The General Conference has never remonstrated against the neglect of the annual conferences to bring these advocates of slavery to an account, nor ordered the Bishops to transfer them to other conferences to be dealt with, which it has power to do ; nor has it condemned the proceedings of those conferences in adopting pro-slavery resolutions, notwithstanding the minutes of the same have been before it for examination ; nor has the General Conference censured the Bishops for putting those resolutions.

(4.) While the General Conference has suffered her ministers and annual conferences to advocate slavery, without a single rebuke, she has condemned modern abolitionism, and condemned ministers for holding and acting out the principles of abolition, and, at the bidding of slaveholders, has passed a resolution denying the oppressed colored member of the church, in the slaveholding States, the right of testifying to the truth in a church trial involving the character of the pale-faced oppressor.

These facts taken together, clearly make the church responsible for slavery.

I think it has now been shown, beyond the possibility of a doubt in the minds of such as look at the subject without prejudice, that the M. E. Church has committed herself to slavery, so as to make herself responsible for its existence. I will not dwell upon the great wickedness of slavery, but rely upon the public sense of justice on this point. And the simple fact that the church is slaveocratic in her principles, feelings and administration, is in my view a sufficient reason for the dissolution of the connection I have so long held with her.

II. A second reason which has operated strongly upon my mind, forcing me to the conclusion that I ought to withdraw from the

church, is found in the principles of her government, especially as they have been developed in the administration since the commencement of the anti-slavery discussion. I have always known that the government of the church was aristocratical in its form and principles, and the greatest "logical wonders" with which I have ever met, have been some few efforts to prove that it is republican or democratic. I know that no church, nor any class of persons in a church, has or can have a right to legislate contrary to the law of Christ; but there are many prudential rules which may be enacted to suit times and circumstances; and that the body of the laity should have no voice in making these rules, even such of them as more immediately concern themselves, I have always viewed as extremely arbitrary in principle: and that every congregation throughout the denomination should be dependent, absolutely so, on the will of an individual for the man who shall preach to them the word of life; and that every minister in the connection should be absolutely dependent upon the judgment or will of one man, for his field of labor, who has power to say whether he shall labor in the sigh-burdened rice swamps of the South, along the shores of the distant Sabine, or in the North, by the cold waters of the St. Lawrence, I never did believe liberal in principle. But I formerly looked upon these arbitrary principles as existing only in form, and my reply has always been, when attacked on the ground of the arbitrary character of our church polity, that there was no oppression in fact,—that though the government was arbitrary in principle, yet the piety, good sense and kind feelings of the bishops and preachers, secures a liberal administration. But I can no longer silence the arguments of others, or the voice of my own judgment, with this plea;—an occasion has arisen, these arbitrary principles have been roused from their slumber, this lion of power has roared and leaped from his lair in vindication, not only of his own claims, but also in vindication of slavery itself. The anti-slavery discussion has been the occasion, and in opposition to this, I have seen persons expelled from the church because they were abolitionists; I have seen class-leaders put out of office because they would open their mouths for the dumb; I have seen preachers suspended and silenced, because they would plead for the oppressed slave; I have seen congregations denied the minister they desired, while others who were not suspected of the crime of modern abolitionism, were accommodated; and I have seen abolition ministers sent to distant or poor circuits, to which I have reason to believe they were appointed as an episcopal chastisement for daring to say that slavery is a sin and ought to be abolished. I have seen whole congregations pronounced out of the church, by a public declaration of the preachers whom the Bishop saw fit most graciously to impose upon them against their known wishes; and the principle of this expulsion *en masse*, without a form of trial, has been officially sanctioned by the Bishop, who is authorized to decide all

such questions. These are but some of the developments of the arbitrary principles of the government of the M. E. church, which have been made during the anti-slavery discussion. I might enlarge by adding other facts and illustrations, but I will leave this question here for the consideration of the candid.

III. A third and final reason which I shall now render, for dissolving my connection with the M. E. Church, is the uncharitable and bitter spirit which is manifested on the part of the adherents of the church, and of her official organs, towards the dissenting brethren. Whenever a brother has presumed to utter an opinion on the subject of church polity, differing from the common views, instead of meeting his views with sound Christian arguments to convince him of his error, the usual method has been at once to denounce him as an enemy, and assail his moral character. It is matter of history that the advocates of our present form of government have not relied so much upon the strength of their arguments, to put down more liberal views that have occasionally manifested themselves in the church, as upon the force of constitutional law vigorously administered. Even since the secession of Brs. Horton, Scott and Sunderland, it has been insisted by some that they should be treated as traitors, and be excluded from the pulpits of the church, while others are admitted who have always held views less in accordance with the common standards of the church. They have already been assailed as being "sordid" in their purposes; as being under the influence of "unhallowed ambition;" as making "not an honest effort;" as being "iniquitous" in their proceedings; and by two different papers in the interest of the church, have the words which inspiration has applied to the self-willed, cruel and murderous, been applied to these brethren, whose offence is that of withdrawing from the church after they have been long abused in it, and after being often told by the same journals that, with their views, they ought to leave it. This is an extravagance of intolerance which I cannot bear. To think of retaining my standing in the church, and at the same time honestly meet and rebuke this abusive and intolerant spirit, wherever I shall meet with it, is hopeless; and to remain in the church by silently enduring it, and thereby appearing to approve of what I abhor and detest, would not only require an entire change in my constitution and temperament, but also a sacrifice of my principles to a selfish, cowardly, worldly policy. If others are prepared to make such sacrifices, I am not; and in saying this, I intend no impeachment of the motives of others, but only a vindication of my own. I leave behind many whom I highly respect and most ardently love. With many of them I have labored and suffered; but now a sense of duty compels me, so far as church relation is concerned, to separate myself from them,—and I trust I do it in the fear of God, with an eye single to his glory, and in the hope of eternal life.

LUTHER LEE.

ANDOVER, DEC. 12, 1842.

THE M. E. CHURCH AND SLAVERY.

[Before proceeding to notice the connection of the M. E. church with Slavery, it may not be improper to glance at the views of Mr. Wesley and the English Methodists.]

SECTION I.

SENTIMENTS OF JOHN WESLEY AND THE ENGLISH WESLEYANS.

The slave trade was extensively carried on during the whole of Mr. Wesley's life. Christians were generally asleep on the subject; and many professors of religion and some ministers of the gospel were extensively engaged in the atrocious business, even at the time of Mr. Wesley's death, and for some years afterward.

But he was in this, as in almost everything else, fifty years before the times. He published in 1774, seventeen years before his death, a pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on Slavery," which contains the modern doctrine of the strongest and severest writers on that subject. And his pamphlet has probably done more good in Europe and America, than any other single document ever written.

The following extracts are from that invaluable work.

"I strike at the root of this complicated villany; I absolutely deny all slaveholding to be consistent with any degree of natural justice."

"That slaveholding is utterly inconsistent with mercy, is almost too plain to need a proof."

"*And this equally concerns every gentleman that has an estate in our American plantations; yea, ALL SLAVEHOLDERS, OF WHATEVER RANK AND DEGREE; seeing men-buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers. You therefore are guilty, yea, PRINCIPALLY GUILTY, of all these frauds, robberies, and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in motion; they would not stir a step without you; therefore the blood of all these wretches who die before their time, whether in their country or elsewhere, lies upon your head. 'The blood of thy brother' (for, whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of Him that made him) 'crieth against thee from the earth,' from the ship, and from the waters. O, whatever it costs, put a stop to its cry before it is too late; instantly, at any price, were it the half of your goods, deliver thyself from blood guiltiness! Thy hands, thy bed, thy furniture, thy house, thy lands, are at present stained with blood! Surely it is enough; accumulate no more guilt; spill no more the blood of the innocent! Do not hire another to shed blood; do not pay him*

for doing it! Whether you are a Christian or no, show yourself a MAN! *Be not more savage than a lion or a bear?*

“Perhaps you will say, ‘I do not buy any negroes; I only use those left me by my father.’ So far it is well; but is it enough to satisfy your own conscience? *Had your father, have you, has any man living, a right to use another as a slave? It cannot be, even setting revelation aside.* It cannot be that either war, or contract, can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen. *Much less is it possible that any child of man should ever be born a slave.* Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air; *and no human law can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature.*

“If, therefore, you have any regard to *justice* (to say nothing of mercy, nor the revealed law of God) render unto all their due. Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion! Be gentle toward all men; and see that you invariably *do unto every one as you would he should do unto you.* J. WESLEY ”

The following is Mr. Wesley’s dying testimony. This letter is exceedingly interesting, inasmuch as it was the last but two which Mr. Wesley ever wrote, and it is dated only four days before his death. It was written to the great and good Mr. Wilberforce, the pioneer of the abolition cause in England.

“LONDON, FEB. 26, 1791.

“DEAR SIR—Unless the Divine power has raised you up as *Athanasius contra Mundum* [Athanasius against the world] I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villany, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But, ‘if God be for you, who can be against you?’ O, ‘be not weary in well doing!’ Go on in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it. Reading this morning a tract, written by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a law, in all our colonies, that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing. *What villany is this!*

“Your affectionate servant,

J. WESLEY.”

And yet the General Conference of the M. E. Church has been guilty of this very “VILLANY,” in the black law affair.

The Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1830, *Resolved*, "That, as a body of Christian ministers, they feel themselves called upon again to record their solemn judgment, that the holding of human beings in a state of slavery *is in direct opposition* to all the principles of natural rights, and to the benign spirit of the religion of Christ.

"That the Conference fully concur in those strong moral views of the *evil of slavery* which are taken by their fellow Christians of different denominations; and that they express their sympathy with an injured portion of their race, and their abhorrence of all those principles on which it is attempted to defend the subjection of human beings to hopeless and interminable slavery.

"That the Conference still farther recommend, in the strongest manner, to such of the members of the Methodist societies as enjoy the *elective franchise*, that, in this great crisis, when the question is, whether justice and humanity shall triumph over oppression and cruelty, or nearly a million of our fellow men, many of whom are also our fellow Christians, shall remain excluded from the rights of humanity, and the privileges of that constitution under which they are born; they will *use that solemn trust* to promote the rescue of our country from the guilt and dishonor which have been brought upon it by a criminal connivance at the oppressions which have so long existed in its colonies, and that, in the elections now on the eve of taking place, *they will give their influence and votes only to those candidates who PLEDGE THEMSELVES* to support in parliament, the most *effectual measures* for the *entire abolition of slavery* throughout the colonies of the British empire."

Dr. Clarke, in his Commentary expressed himself on the subject of slavery as follows:

"In heathen countries, slavery was in some sort excusable; among Christians, it is an *enormity* and a *crime*, for which perdition has scarcely an adequate state of punishment."

Again he says—"I here register my testimony against the unprincipled, inhuman, anti-christian, and diabolical *slave trade*—with all its authors, promoters, abettors, and sacrilegious gains; as well as against the great devil, the father of it and them."

The following are extracts from Richard Watson on slavery:

"Slavery was manstealing in its origin; and with this vicious origin it remains tainted to this day. It would be as hopeless a task to wash it off, as to wash the Ethiop white. Characterized as a crime against God and man, the thin gauze of sophistry cannot conceal its hateful aspect; and the attempt to find a palliation for it, only makes more audible those thunders which are launched against it, as one of the most odious crimes both in the law and in the Gospel.

"My argument then is, if it was wrong to enslave the negroes, it is wrong to keep them in hopeless bondage; and it follows that,

after this country had renounced the African slave trade. it was bound by the *very principles* on which that wretched traffic was repudiated, to have taken measures for the liberation of all who had thus been wickedly reduced to a state of captivity, and long before this time to have converted them into a free, industrious, and happy peasantry."

"Slavery is a national *violence* and *theft*—an oppressive, a debasing, a relentless, and a *murderous* bondage."

The following sentiment was expressed by Dr. Bunting, President of the Wesleyan Conference, in 1836.

"Slavery is *always wrong*—ESSENTIALLY, ETERNALLY, and INCURABLY WRONG. DIE IT MUST; and happy should I have been, had they [the General Conference of the M. E. Church] PASSED SENTENCE OF DEATH UPON IT!"

Such has been Wesleyan Methodism from the *beginning*; and such was American Methodism *once*. But alas what is it *now*!

The following is from an Address of the Wesleyan Conference to the M. E. Church, put forth in 1835:

"Our American brethren will doubtless allow us the fraternal liberty to express our conviction that GREAT SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES are *opposed to the continuance* of slavery in a *Christian state*; that the permission of it is one of those deviations from natural equity and evangelical purity which call for *further deviations* to abet and maintain them; that it is contrary to the precepts of Christianity, and violates and counteracts the principles and obligations by which the Gospel urges those precepts."

In 1836 the Wesleyan Conference sent out another address to the M. E. Church, from which I make the following extract:

"*Slavery in itself* is so obviously opposed to the *immutable principles of justice*, to the *inalienable rights of man* of whatever color or condition, to the social and civil improvement and happiness of the human family, *to the principles and precepts of Christianity*, and to the full accomplishment of the merciful designs of the gospel, that we cannot but consider it the *duty of the Christian church to bear an unequivocal testimony against a system which involves so much SIN AGAINST GOD*, and so much oppression and wrong, inflicted on an unoffending race of our fellow men."

The pro-slavery character of the M. E. Church prevented the publication of either of the addresses from which the above extracts are taken, in any of the church papers. A motion was made by the writer, on the floor of the General Conference, to have these addresses published; but it was *rejected*. Thus our Wesleyan brethren were treated with *contempt*.

SECTION II.

FORMER SENTIMENTS AND USAGES OF THE M. E. CHURCH.

The M. E. Church never advocated the doctrine of *immediate* abolition; but then we have the clearest evidence that she was formerly strongly opposed to the *continuance* of slavery in the church or in the country,—and that she has widely departed from her former strong testimony against slavery.

The first two bishops of the M. E. Church (Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury) were decided anti-slavery men. They kindled up, according to the testimony of Dr. Capers, a fire in the South which did not go out for thirty years. Mr. Asbury's Journal is full of his opposition to slavery. I will give a few specimens.

"1772. We dined with Mr. R., who cannot keep negroes for conscience's sake, and this was a topic of our conversation.

"1776. After preaching at the Point, I met the class and then the black people, some of whose unhappy masters forbid their coming for religious instruction. How will the sons of oppression answer for their conduct, when the great proprietor of all shall call them to account! *Vol. 1, p. 289.*

"1780. Spoke to some select friends about slave-keeping, but they could not bear it; this I know, God will plead the cause of the oppressed, though it gives offence to say so here. O Lord, banish the INFERNAL SPIRIT OF SLAVERY from thy dear Zion.

"1783. We all agreed (at the Virginia Conference) in the spirit of African liberty, and strong testimonies were borne in its favor at our love-feast.—*Ib. pp. 295, 356.*

"1785. At the Virginia Conference he says:—I found the minds of the people greatly agitated with our rules against slavery, and a prepared petition to the general assembly for the emancipation of the blacks. Colonel —— and Dr. Coke disputed on the subject, and the Col. used some threats: next day brother O'Kelly let fly at them, and they were made angry enough; we, however, came off with whole bones.—*Ib. p. 384.*

"We waited on General Washington, who received us very politely, and gave us his opinion against slavery.—*Ib. p. 385.*

"1787. Rode to Brother Johnson's—without the labor of slaves, he manages to have abundance for man and beast.—*Vol. 2, p. 11.*

"1788. Virginia.—Other persuasions are less supine; and their ministers boldly preach against the freedom of slaves. Our brother Everett, with no less zeal and boldness, cries aloud for liberty and emancipation.

"Maryland—most of our members in these parts have freed their slaves.—*Ib. p. 39.*

"1796. We reached Charleston. Here are the rich, the rice, and the slaves. The last is awful to me. Wealthy people settled on the rice lands of Cooper's river, hold from fifty to two hundred slaves on a plantation in chains of bondage.—*Ib. p. 241.*

“ My spirit was grieved at the conduct of some Methodists, that *hire out slaves*, at public places to the highest bidder, to cut, skin, and starve them. I think such members ought to be dealt with. On the side of the oppressors there is law and power, but where is justice and mercy to the poor slaves? What eye will pity, what hand will help, or ear listen to their distresses? I will try if words can be like drawn swords to pierce the hearts of the owners.—*Ib. p. 273.*

“ 1798. My mind is much pained. O! to be dependant on slaveholders is in part to be a slave, and I was free born.

“ On Saturday, I had a close conversation with some of our local ministry. We were happy to find seven out of ten were not in the spirit or practice of slavery.

“ I assisted Philip Sands to draw up an agreement for our officers to sign against slavery. Thus we may know the real sentiments of our local preachers. It appears to me *that we can never fully reform the people, until we reform the preachers*—and that hitherto except purging the travelling connection, we have been working at the wrong end. But, if it be lawful for local preachers to hold slaves, then it is lawful for travelling preachers also; and they may keep plantations and overseers upon their quarters: but this *reproach of inconsistency must be rolled away.*

“ 1814. *Georgia.*—Away with the false cant, that the better you use the negroes, the worse they will use you! Make them good, then—teach them the fear of God, and learn to fear Him yourselves, ye masters! I understand not the doctrine of cruelty. As soon as the poor Africans see me they spring with life to the boat, and make a heavy flat skim along like a light canoe; poor starved souls—God will judge?”—*Ib. p. 376.*

How unlike are these sentiments to the doctrine of Bishop Hedding, as contained in the following sentence:

“ The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, ‘ Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.’ ”—*Ch. Ad. and Journal, Oct. 20, 1837.*

“ In 1780, the Conference acknowledged that slavery is contrary TO THE LAWS OF GOD, MAN, AND NATURE, and hurtful to society; CONTRARY TO THE DICTATES OF CONSCIENCE AND PURE RELIGION; and doing what we would not that others should do unto us; and they pass their DISAPPROBATION upon all our friends who keep slaves, and they advise their freedom.”

In Lee’s History of the Methodists we are told that the following rules were in substance, adopted in 1784.

“ We view it as contrary to the golden law of God, on which hangs all the law and the prophets, and the unalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the revolution, to hold in the deepest debasement, in a more abject slavery than is perhaps

to be found in any part of the world except America, so many souls that are capable of the image of God. We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us; and for that purpose we add the following to the rules of our society, viz:

“Every member in our Society, who has slaves, in those States where the laws will admit of freeing them, shall, after notice given him by the preacher, within twelve months (except in Virginia, and there within two years) legally execute and record an instrument, whereby he sets free every slave in his possession; those who are from forty to forty-five, immediately, or at farthest at the age of forty-five.

“Those who are between the ages of twenty-five and forty, immediately, or within the course of five years. Those who are between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, immediately, or at farthest at the age of thirty. Those who are under the age of twenty, as soon as they are twenty-five at farthest. And every infant, immediately on its birth.

“Every person concerned, who will not comply with these rules, shall have liberty quietly to withdraw from our Society within the twelve months following; the notice being given him, as aforesaid; otherwise the assistant shall exclude him.

“No person so voluntarily withdrawn, or so excluded, shall ever partake of the supper of the Lord with the Methodists, till he complies with the above requisitions.

“No person holding slaves, shall, in future, be admitted into Society, or to the Lord’s Supper, till he previously comply with these rules, concerning Slavery.

“*Those who buy, sell, or give them away, unless on purpose to free them, shall be expelled immediately.*”

The very next year (1785) the conference said,—

“We do hold in the DEEPEST ABHORRENCE THE PRACTICE OF SLAVERY, and SHALL NOT CEASE TO SEEK its DESTRUCTION, by all wise and prudent means.”

In 1788 the following item made a part of the General Rules:—

“The *buying or selling the BODIES AND SOULS of men, women or children*, with an intention to enslave them.”—*Bangs’ History of M. E. Church, Vol. 1, p. 213.*

[In the year 1800 the following articles on slavery made a part of the M. E. Discipline.]

“OF SLAVERY.

“*Question.* What regulations shall be made for the extirpation of the *crying evil* of African slavery?

“*Answer, 1.* We declare that we are *more than ever* convinced of the great evil of African slavery, which still exists in these United States, and do most earnestly recommend to the Yearly Conferences, Quarterly Meetings, and to those who have the oversight

of Districts and Circuits, to be exceedingly cautious what persons they admit to official stations in our Church; and in the case of future admission to official stations, to require such security of those who hold slaves, for the emancipation of them, *immediately*, or *gradually*, as the laws of the States respectively, and the circumstances of the case will admit; and we do fully authorize all the Yearly Conferences to make whatever regulation they judge proper, in the present case, respecting the admission of persons to official stations in our church.

“ When any travelling preacher becomes an owner of a slave or slaves, *by any means*, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our church, unless he executes, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the State in which he lives.

“ No slaveholder shall be received in society, till the preacher who has the oversight of the Circuit, has spoken to him freely and faithfully upon the subject of slavery.

“ 4. Every member of the society, who sells a slave, shall immediately, after full proof, be excluded from the society; and if any member of our society purchase a slave, the ensuing Quarterly Meeting shall determine on the number of years in which the slave so purchased would work out the price of his purchase. And the person so purchasing, shall immediately after such determination, execute a legal instrument for the manumission of such slave, at the expiration of the term determined by the Quarterly Meeting. And in default of his executing such instrument of manumission, or on his refusal to submit his case to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting, *such member shall be excluded the society*. Provided also, that in the case of a female slave, it shall be inserted in the aforesaid instrument of manumission, that all her children who shall be born during the years of her servitude, shall be free at the following times, namely—every female child at the age of *twenty-one*, and every male child at the age of *twenty-five*. Nevertheless, if the member of our society, executing the said instrument of manumission, judge it proper, he may fix the times of manumission of the female slaves before mentioned, at an earlier age than that which is prescribed above.

“ 5. The preachers and other members of our society, are requested to consider the subject of negro slavery with deep attention; and that they impart to the General Conference, through the medium of the Yearly Conferences, or otherwise, any important thoughts upon the subject, that the Conference may have *full light*, in order to take further steps towards the eradicating this enormous evil from that part of the Church of God to which they are connected.

“ 6. The Annual Conferences are directed to draw up addresses for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, to the legislatures of those States, in which no general laws have been passed for that

purpose. These addresses shall urge in the most respectful, but pointed manner, the necessity of a law for the gradual emancipation of the slaves ; proper Committees shall be appointed, by the Annual Conferences, out of the most respectable of our friends, for the conducting of the business ; and the *Presiding Elders*, Elders, Deacons, and Travelling Preachers, shall procure as many proper signatures as possible to the addresses ; and give all the assistance in their power, in every respect, to aid the committees, and to further *this blessed undertaking*. LET THIS BE CONTINUED FROM YEAR TO YEAR, TILL THE DESIRED END BE ACCOMPLISHED."

SECTION III.

THE M. E. CHURCH PRO-SLAVERY.

The M. E. Church has evidently been progressing *backwards* from the year 1800, though the first retrograde step was taken in 1792, in the alteration which then took place in the General Rule, leaving out the words "bodies and souls," &c., as will be seen from what follows.

Rev. Robert Emory in his history of the Discipline, informs us that he finds the following in

1789. "The buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women or children with an intention to enslave them."

1792. It reads, "The buying or selling of men, women or children, with an intention to enslave them."

1808. It reads, "The buying *and* selling of men, women *and* children," &c. *For this alteration no authority is found in the journal of the General Conference.*

An important admission this ! If *and* was put in the place of *or* by mistake, which is hardly possible, how is the leaving out of BODIES AND SOULS in the original rule, to be accounted for ? Let the friends of the church account for these changes as they may ; we have positive proof before our eyes, that the rule has been changed twice since the church was organized ; and this rule being a part of the constitution of the church, the constitution of the church has been changed *twice*.

And the following, from a letter published in the Pittsburgh Christian Advocate, by Rev. Mr. Drummond, is not less important.

"If we take the action of the General Conference, as a true index of the anti-slavery feeling and zeal of the church, I think it is apparent, that these have been considerably diminished since the year 1800."

Now I would inquire, what becomes of the Declaration of the Bishops, made in their address to the late General Conference, that the "general rule on slavery" "*has stood from the beginning*" UNCHANGED ?"

These changes have greatly altered the character of the rule. The original rule made the crime of slavetrading in the M. E.

Church what the spirit of inspiration made it in mystic Babylon—trading in souls of men. When the change was made from *bodies and souls of men, women and children*, to *men, women or children*, the idea of selling and buying the immortal part was not so clearly expressed, and the Babylonish character of the church was not so fully and clearly acknowledged. Here was a gain on the part of slavery. Though buying men, women or children was buying the *bodies and souls* of these persons, the language was smoothed down, and no longer calculated to shock the moral feelings so violently. But when *and* was substituted for *or*, the whole meaning of the rule became changed. Previous to this, the *buying or selling* a man, woman or child—any human being—was a violation of the rule; but not so now. It takes six things to violate the rule as it now stands. 1. Buying a man, (or men.) 2. Buying a woman, or (women.) 3. Buying a child, (or children.) 4. Selling a man, (or men.) 5. Selling a woman, (or women.) 6. Selling a child, (or children.) Mark, it is the buying AND selling all these persons which it forbids, not buying OR selling any one class of them, or any one of either class, nor yet buying AND selling any one class, or any one of either class, but buying AND selling at least, one of each class.

In 1804, the paragraphs about considering the subject, and petitions to the legislatures (namely, No. 4 of 1796 and No. 6 of 1800) were stricken out.

1808. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of 1796 were struck out, and the following substituted.

“3. The General Conference authorizes each annual conference to form their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves.”

This was stricken out in 1820, and the last three paragraphs of the section on slavery, p., 196 of Dis., were added.

And yet the Western Christian Advocate, of December 8th, 1837, says, “our readers should *know* that our church has *neither given up nor* MODIFIED ANY of her strong Scriptural doctrines, OR REGULATIONS, on the subject of slavery.” And Dr. Bangs, in the Christian Advocate, of January 29, 1833, said the Methodist Episcopal Church, “has always held ONE *undeviating language in opposition to slavery*.” One of two conclusions must be come to: Drs. Elliot and Bangs are either ignorant of the history of their church’s connection with slavery, or are dishonest enough to practice deception on their readers, by affirming what they know is not true.”

From 1820 to 1835 the church appears to have been in a profound sleep; and when she awoke it was only to oppose all anti-slavery measures. Coke and Asbury were dead, and the old Methodist preachers had learned better than to preach against slavery.

The church since 1820 has borne no testimony against slavery, except what is contained in the *mutilated* general rule; and even this

this is admitted to be a dead letter in the South. The section on slavery in the latter part of the Discipline many Episcopal Methodists contend is not in *opposition*, but in *favor* of slavery.

In the latter end of the year 1834, a number of ministers, members of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences, addressed their brethren in the ministry of these two conferences, in an able Appeal, which was published the fore part of Jan. 1835, in Zion's Herald Extra. This drew forth a long reply called the "Counter Appeal," signed by W. Fisk, D. D. Whedon, John Lindsey, Jacob Sanborn, H. H. White, H. S. Ramsdell, Abel Stevens, and I believe one other. This document was judged to contain pro-slavery sentiments, and it was critically examined by the authors of the Appeal, April 22, 1835. About the time the first Appeal was written, and before it was published, another member of the New England Conference commenced a series of essays in Zion's Herald on the subject of slavery. The whole subject of slavery and abolition was discussed in Zion's Herald for several months, by O. Scott and others on one side, and W. Fisk and D. D. Whedon on the other; and so rapidly did anti-slavery sentiments spread and prevail, that within six months, a majority of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences were converted to the doctrine of immediate abolition; and in June, 1835, an anti-slavery delegation from both conferences was secured to the General Conference, with the exception of a single delegate!

The General Conference assembled at Cincinnati the ensuing May. It consisted of about 150 members. All except 17 were either slaveholders or anti-abolitionists. Of these seventeen, nine were from New Hampshire, six from New England, one from Maine, and one from Pittsburg.

At this Conference commenced what may be emphatically termed the modern pro-slavery measures of the M. E. Church; or in other words, "the reign of terror!"

We will glance at some of the pro-slavery measures adopted at the General Conference of 1836?

An Anti-Slavery Society had been formed in Cincinnati a year or two before. A meeting of the society was appointed for the evening of the 10th of May, to which the abolitionists attending the conference as delegates, were invited. Of those who attended, two of them made remarks suited to the occasion. On the 12th of May, Rev. S. G. Roszell presented to the Conference the following preamble and resolutions:—

"Whereas, great excitement has pervaded this country on the subject of modern abolitionism, which is reported to have been increased in this city by the unjustifiable conduct of two members of the General Conference, in lecturing upon, and in favor of that agitating topic; and whereas, such a course on the part of any of its members is calculated to bring upon this body the suspicion and distrust of the community, and misrepresent its sentiments in

regard to the point at issue ; and whereas, in this aspect of the case, a due regard for its own character, as well as a just concern for the interests of the church confided to its care, demand a full, decided and unequivocal expression of the views of the General Conference in the premises—Therefore,

“1. Resolved,—By the delegates of the annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, that they disapprove in the most unqualified sense, the conduct of the two members of the General Conference, who are reported to have lectured in this city recently, upon, and in favor of, modern abolitionism.”

“2. Resolved,—By the delegates of the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, that they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention, to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slave-holding States of this Union.”

The preamble and resolutions were adopted—the first resolution by 122 to 11, the last by 120 to 14.

A member of the General Conference moved to amend the last resolution by incorporating a sentiment of the Discipline on this wise: that though “we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery,” yet we are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, &c. This amendment was in the very language of the Discipline; and though the *very sentence* which would have contained it, would have condemned abolitionism, yet such was the proslavery character of the General Conference, that they would not say, as the Discipline had always said, that slavery was an “evil!”

They refused to publish the address of the English Wesleyan Conference, because it alluded to slavery; and in a Pastoral Address to the M. E. church, this Conference exhorted Methodists to abstain from all “abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronizing any of their publications,” &c.

They further said: “From every view of the subject which we have been able to take, and from the most calm and dispassionate survey of the whole ground, we have come to the conclusion, that the only safe, scriptural, and prudent way for us, both as ministers and people to take, is, **WHOLLY TO REFRAIN** from this agitating subject,” &c.

The Ohio Annual Conference, had a short time before,

“1. Resolved,—That we deeply regret the proceedings of the abolitionists, and Anti-Slavery Societies in the free States, and the consequent excitement produced thereby in the slave States; that we, as a Conference, disclaim all connection and co-operation with, or belief in the same; and that we hereby recommend to our junior preachers, local brethren, and private members within our bounds, to abstain from any connection with them, or participation of their acts in the premises whatever.”

“2. Resolved,—That those brethren and citizens of the North, who resist the abolition movements with firmness and moderation,

are the true friends to the church, to the slaves of the South, and to the constitution of our common country," &c.

The New York Annual Conference met in June, 1836, and

"1. Resolved,—That this Conference fully concur in the advice of the late General Conference, as expressed in their Pastoral Address."

"2. Resolved,—That we disapprove of the members of this conference patronizing, or in any way giving countenance to a paper called 'Zion's Watchman,' because in our opinion, it tends to disturb the peace and harmony of the body, by sowing dissensions in the church."

"3. Resolved,—That although we could not condemn any man, or withhold our suffrages from him on account of his *opinions* merely in reference to abolitionism, yet we are decidedly of the opinion that none ought to be elected to the office of a deacon, or elder, in our church, unless he give a pledge to the conference, that he will refrain from agitating the church with discussions on this subject, and the more especially as the one promises, 'reverently to obey them to whom the charge and government over him is committed, following with a glad mind and will, their godly admonitions:' and the other with equal solemnity promises, to 'maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in him, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are, or shall be committed to his charge.'"

In 1838, the same Conference

"Resolved,—As the sense of this conference, that any of its members, or probationers, who shall patronize Zion's Watchman, either by writing in commendation of its character, by circulating it, recommending it to our people, or procuring subscribers, or by collecting or remitting monies, shall be deemed guilty of indiscretion, and dealt with accordingly."

Under this rule, several members of that Conference were tried and suspended.

In the year 1837, the Baltimore Conference passed the following resolution:

"That in *all cases of administration* under the *general rule*, in reference to buying *and* selling men, women and children, &c., it be and hereby is recommended to all committees, as the sense of this Conference, that said rule be *taken, construed and understood*, so as *not to make the guilt or innocence of the accused to depend on the SIMPLE FACT of PURCHASE or SALE of any such slave or slaves, but upon the attendant circumstances of cruelty, injustice or inhumanity*, on the one hand, or those of *kind purposes or good intentions*, on the other, under which the transactions shall have been perpetuated; and further, it is recommended that, in all such cases, the charge be brought for immorality, and the *circumstances* be adduced as specifications under that charge."

This resolution takes the ground openly, that slaves may be

bought and sold without guilt; and not only so, but with *kind purposes and good intentions*. The *guilt* or *innocence* does not, in the judgment of the Baltimore Conference, depend on “the simple fact of purchase or sale,” (mark this,) but on the *circumstances*; hence the charge is not to be brought for the violation of the “*rule*,” but for immorality; and the fact that a slave was *bought or sold*, is not to be brought as a specification to sustain the charge of immorality, but the circumstances. Then there are circumstances in which it would be right, kind and good, to sell or buy slaves, and in which it would be *wrong, cruel and unjust* so to do. The circumstances are to make out the guilt in a case of administration under this rule, the “general rule,” not the *FACT* of *sale or purchase*; hence the rule does not forbid *sale or purchase*.

The General Conference of 1840 approved of the journals of the Baltimore Conference with this resolution in them—approved of them, this resolution and all; consequently approved of it, and thus made it their own; hence the doctrine of the Baltimore Conference, that the “general rule” is not to “be taken, construed, or understood,” so to convict a person of guilt, &c., for the simple “*purchase or sale*” of slaves, is the doctrine of the General Conference—the doctrine of the whole church; so that, allowing the Baltimore Conference to judge—the General Conference to determine, the constitution of the church has been changed to favor the slave trade, trading in slaves, buying and selling them, than which nothing can be plainer.

The Georgia Conference, in 1837, passed the following resolutions, it is said, *unanimously*:—

“Whereas there is a clause in the Discipline of our Church which states that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of *slavery*; and whereas the said clause has been *perverted* by some, and used in such a manner as to produce the impression that the Methodist Episcopal Church believed *slavery* to be a *moral evil*,

“Therefore, *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Georgia Annual Conference, that slavery, as it exists in the United States, *is not a moral evil*.

“*Resolved*, That we view *slavery* as a civil and domestic institution, and one with which, as ministers of Christ, we have nothing to do, further than to ameliorate the condition of the slave, by endeavoring to impart to him and his master the benign influences of the religion of Christ, and aiding both on their way to heaven.

“On motion, it was *Resolved, unanimously*, That the Georgia Annual Conference regard with feelings of profound respect and approbation the dignified course pursued by our several superintendents or bishops in suppressing the attempts that have been made by various individuals to get up and protract an excitement in the churches and country on the subject of *abolitionism*.

“*Resolved*, further, That they shall have our cordial and zealous

support in sustaining them in the ground they have taken.—[Extract from the Minutes.]

“THOMAS C. BENNING, *Secretary*.”

On the above resolutions the Christian Guardian, a Methodist paper published in Canada, made the following sensible remarks :

“ALAS! ALAS! ‘*You that have tears, prepare to shed them now.*’

“Sainted spirit of the venerable Wesley! Could shame and anger disturb thy deep and holy tranquillity, this would call them into exercise! If for aught thou couldst wish to revisit this ‘world of grief and sin,’ it would surely be to erase from the records of Methodism so foul a blot upon the character of the system which claims thee as its founder; or to inscribe beneath it, in emblazoned capitals, thy firm protest. Gladly wouldst thou, with Heaven’s permission, have recorded, in a ‘hand-writing upon the wall’ of that conference room, thy unchanged belief of the true character of ‘AMERICAN SLAVERY, *the vilest that ever saw the sun.*’ But ‘*if they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*’”

On the 18th of January, 1838, Dr. Capers introduced into the South Carolina Conference, a similar resolution; containing the sentiment that slavery is not a moral evil. It passed by a large vote—unanimous, I believe.

The General Conference has sanctioned both these resolutions, and passed them both, to all intents and purposes, by its act of approving the Journals. That body approved them both, by a *direct vote*: hence these resolutions have become the resolutions of the whole church!

The Discipline requires (see p. 25) that the journals containing the proceedings of each Annual Conference be sent to the General Conference. The General Conference appoints a committee of one from each Annual Conference, to whom all the Annual Conference journals are referred for examination, and, if any thing be found anti-Methodistic, to report the same to the General Conference, to be censured or disposed of as that body may determine. The General Conference of 1840 had the journals of these conferences before them, as also those of the other Annual Conferences. This committee made a report dated June 1, 1840, in which the New Hampshire, New England, and Oneida Conferences were censured by name, and some others without naming them; but no complaint was whispered against the Georgia or South Carolina Conferences. While this report was under consideration, Br. Dodge, of the Genesee Conference, offered the following amendment: “Rev. J. Dodge offered an amendment to the preamble, condemnatory of the Georgia resolution. He thought that, as the action of several conferences had received animadversion, impartiality required that there should be uniformity of treatment. He therefore moved to amend the report by adding, ‘The action of the

Georgia Conference, in declaring that slavery, as it exists in these United States, is not a moral evil, contradicts the sense of the *general rule* and the tenth section of the Discipline on the subject, and is therefore irregular.' ”

This amendment was laid on the table, and the report of the committees approving of the acts and doings of the Georgia and South Carolina Conferences adopted by a direct vote. The journals of the Georgia Conference were approved by the General Conference, in full view of this resolution ; for Br. Dodge asked the Conference, to say that it was “*irregular*,” and they would not do even that much. The General Conference approved of this resolution ; for they approved the journals, of which it was a part—the whole journals, without exception—and to approve of the whole is to approve of all the parts ; for the whole contains all the parts. The Conference was asked to except to this part, and would not. This makes the case still stronger. And what is true of the Georgia Conference is also true of that of South Carolina, and of the Baltimore Conference, in the case we have noticed of buying and selling slaves. The General Conference has said *just* what these conferences said, by approving and adopting what they said. The General Conference did say, in this case, that slavery, as it exists, not in the M. E. church, but in the United States, is *not* a moral evil ; and when the General Conference said it, the M. E. church said it ; for that conference is the mouth of the church. This, all this is as clear as demonstration can make any thing.

“Not a moral evil !” In 1780, slavery was “*contrary to the laws of God, man and nature* ;” now “not a moral evil !” In 1784, it was a “*crying evil*,” and any member, in any part of the country, who “sold a slave,” was to be “*immediately expelled* ;” now, “not a *moral* evil !” In 1785, it was held in the “*deepest abhorrence* ;” in 1837, “not a moral evil !” It was still a crying evil in 1801 ; and expulsion was the penalty for selling a slave ; but, in 1836, the General Conference condemned abolition, but refused to condemn slavery : therefore, in 1837, an Annual Conference says that slavery “is not a moral evil !” Can you, brethren, believe the Georgia and Baltimore Conferences would ever have taken the ground they have, had it not been for the doings of the General Conference ? Can you see how a Methodist Bishop could possibly put such resolutions to vote, if a Bishop has a right in any case to decline such business ? Was that “disciplinary business ?” “proper conference business ?” In view of all these facts, can you doubt that the influence of the M. E. church is in favor of slavery ? For all this prostration of discipline, the General Conference laid the foundation !

But to see a body of professed ministers of Christ call that sum of all villanies, (American slavery,) a “civil and domestic institution !” How *civil* to rob human beings of all their rights—to enslave the image of God—to steal and enslave innocent children !

If this is a *civil* institution, I hardly know where we should go to find a criminal institution! All this passes unreprieved by the official organs of the church!

And now I ask, has not the *spirit* as well as the practice of slavery increased in the M. E. church for the last fifty years? I can no more doubt this, than I can doubt my existence. If any proposition can be established by facts, this can be.

And is it not equally certain, that the influence of the M. E. church has been for some time past in favor of slavery? I cannot resist this conviction. I am morally certain that the M. E. church is at this time one of the "great props" of slavery. A slaveholding ministry! A slaveholding church! What inconsistency! Do not many ministers and members give their influence and example to what the Bible calls, and Mr. Wesley considers, *man-stealing*?

Are there not Achans in the church, a thousand times worse than Achan of old? He robbed God in temporal things: she has robbed him of *his own image*. She has stolen, not a wedge of gold, a Babylonish garment and a few hundred shekels of silver, but she has stolen *human beings*, and made merchandize of *immortal spirits*! It appears to me that the language of the Prophet Ezekiel to ancient Tyre, is as applicable to the M. E. church as it was to her.

"Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy TRAFFIC; therefore will I bring forth a FIRE from the MIDST OF THEE, it shall DEVOUR THEE; and I will bring thee to ASHES upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee."—*Ezekiel xxviii.*

The M. E. church has "defiled" her "SANCTUARIES" by the iniquity of her "TRAFFIC." And does not the Almighty now threaten to cast her off as profane, and to destroy her? Is not the portrait of Tyre too true a likeness of the Methodist Episcopal church? If she does not put away her iniquity, violence and merchandize in the souls and bodies of men, the days of her prosperity will soon be numbered.

The voice of warning has gone forth, and the church now sins at her peril. Never till of late, has a Methodist minister dared to lift his *voice* or *pen* in defence of slavery; but now, the man-stealer and robber finds apologists and defenders among Methodist Episcopal preachers, and that too in the Free States! The church is stained with *blood*, and haunted with the groans of *deathless spirits*! Surely, it is enough. God's judgments will not always linger, nor his justice forever sleep. She claims the descendants of *stolen human beings* as PROPERTY! She makes slaves of the purchase of the Redeemer's blood.

Rev. Wm. Winans said, on the floor of the last General Conference, that he had become a slaveholder from *principle*!

Many members of the church have been expelled—class-leaders,

exhorters and local preachers have been disfranchised—young men have been refused admission into conferences for no other reason but their being active abolitionists. Traveling preachers have been suspended for contumacy and insubordination in relation to abolition. Presiding elders have been removed from their districts for their abolition measures, and bishops have gagged annual conferences on the slave question. The Discipline has been twice altered to effect the expulsion of the editor of Zion's Watchman, and bishops have exhorted Methodist trustees to close their houses against Methodist anti-slavery lecturers. Several conferences have forced their young men to pledge themselves that they would not agitate the church with discussions on the slave question, before they could be ordained; while no reformation pledges have been required of *man-stealing* ministers, as a condition of ordination. That which, according to Mr. Wesley, is exactly on a level with man-stealing, is in the opinion of the church, a very small matter compared with the shocking abominations of abolitionism!

Rev. Elijah Hedding, D. D., one of the Methodist Bishops, has said in a published address:

“The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, ‘Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.’”—*Ch. Adv. and Jour.* Oct. 20, 1837.

The General Conference of 1840 were guilty of the following pro-slavery measures.

1. It was *proved* on the floor of the General Conference, that the word “or” in the General Rule had been changed to “and” by *carelessness* or *design*, thus favoring slavery. This Stephen G. Roszel and Dr. Capers boldly asserted. No one either did or could deny this. It was *proved* that the word “or” was in the Discipline since 1808; and since that time the change could not have been constitutionally made without going the round of the annual conferences: but from the records it appears that this had never been done. And yet with all this plain, palpable evidence before them, they refused to make the correction! And why did they do this? I know no other reason but their *love of slavery*; or, at least, their fear of slaveholders.

2. They refused, when their attention was called to the subject, to take exceptions to the resolutions of the Georgia and South Carolina Conferences, declaring slavery *not to be a moral evil*! And as the General Conference approved the journals of these conferences, with these resolutions in them, they thereby endorsed the doctrine which they contain. The doctrine, therefore, that slavery is not a moral evil, *as it exists in the United States*, is the deliberate sentiment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in her collective capacity.

3. But to cap the climax of pro-slaveryism, the General Conference passed the following resolution.

"That it is inexpedient and UNJUSTIFIABLE in any of our ministers to admit the testimony of COLORED PERSONS against a white person, in church trials, in those states and Territories where such testimony is rejected in COURTS OF LAW."

Here the rights and interests of the membership of the Church are not only cloven down, but the positive authority of Jesus Christ is set aside, and the unrighteous laws of a slaveholding community are made the measure of church privileges, and the standard of ecclesiastical proceedings.

[It is true the Colored Testimony resolution was rescinded at the General Conference of 1844; but this was done more from *expediency* than from *principle*. It was done to prevent secession. Had abolitionists and seceders made no noise about the matter, the records of the church had remained stained to this day!]

Bishop Waugh, at the New England Conference held in Springfield, Mass., in June, 1842, refused to put the question for the adoption of the following resolution, stating that it was too late in the day to give his reasons for so doing.

"Resolved, That it is the solemn conviction of the New England Annual Conference, that all slaveholding, that is, all recognition of the right of property in human beings, is contrary to the laws of nature and religion, and ought therefore to be discouraged by all wise and prudent means."

The influence of the Bishops is, and has been for years, decidedly in favor of slavery.

The same is true of all the General Conference papers.

It is not slandering the Church then, to say, that as a whole, she is *pro-slavery to the core*.

There is as much proof that the General Conference of the M. E. church is pro-slavery, as there is that the United States Congress is pro-slavery.

And those brethren who come out from pro-slavery political parties, in consequence of their corruption, and still remain in a pro-slavery church, are *grossly inconsistent*!

SECTION IV.

THE DUTY OF SECEDING FROM PRO-SLAVERY CHURCHES.

It cannot be right to remain a member of a church which tolerates slaveholding, unless it be right to hold communion with *man-stealers*—which are the worst of all stealers.

Mr. Wesley says, "This *equally* concerns *all* slaveholders, seeing men-buyers are exactly on a level with *men-stealers*." And the Bible says, "If he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." Here the crime of *holding* those in bondage who were originally stolen, is considered a crime of equal enormity with that of the first thieves—a crime punishable (under the laws) with DEATH!

If it be right to retain a connection with a church which tolerates

slaveholding, then it must follow that we are at liberty to remain in fellowship with any other class of sinners. Slavery involves almost every other crime: it is the embodiment of the most frightful crimes that fall under the ban of the divine law, and if it can be admitted into the church, with the dark cloud of guilt, the deep and wide channels of corruption, and the bitter and overflowing waters of human misery, which follow in its train, there is no crime this side of Pandemonium itself, which can be excluded from the Church of Christ, by the laws which he has enacted for the government of the same. If this sin, when tolerated in the church, does not make secession a duty, no other sin, nor all other sins combined, can make secession a duty; and we are driven upon the fearful consequence that we are at liberty, as christians, to remain in, and support a church which tolerates every sin that has ever been committed in this fallen and corrupt world. When the church spreads her fold so wide as to enclose sinners, she loses her identity, and her distinctive character is merged in the common character of the world. If the toleration of slavery in the church does not make secession a duty, the existence of drunkenness, fornication, adultery, robbery and theft, would not make secession a duty; and yet not a man can be found who dare say he would remain in a church after it had repeatedly and publicly refused to make rules for the expulsion of persons notoriously guilty of these latter crimes. By their own decision, then, in relation to other sins, are abolitionists bound to secede from all pro-slavery churches.

The same principle that requires us to expel a corrupt individual, must require us to withdraw ourselves from the association, when a majority are equally corrupt, rendering their expulsion impossible. Now, it is too plain to be denied, that a majority of the M. E. church, and several other religious denominations, do tolerate slaveholders in the church; the minority, therefore, not having it in their power to separate themselves from the corruption of slaveholding, by expelling the corrupt party, are bound to effect such separation by seceding themselves from the corrupt body. If it be wrong to remain in church relation with a corrupt individual, which must be true if the church is bound to expel corrupt individuals, it cannot be right to remain in church relation with a greater number of individuals that are equally corrupt. The duty of expulsion rests upon the obligation to separate ourselves from sinners, and as this obligation cannot be lessened by increasing the number of the corrupt to a majority, it follows beyond the power of contradiction, that when a majority of any religious community become guilty of what ought to exclude an individual, the minority are under obligation to secede; and as slaveholding is a crime for which persons ought to be excluded from the Christian Church, it follows, by an irresistible conclusion, that all true and honest abolitionists are bound to secede from their

respective churches, which have made themselves answerable for slaveholding within their pale.

To admit slaveholders to the Church, is to say that slaveholding is, in the opinion of the Church, consistent with the principles and obligations of Christianity ; hence, the Church that admits slaveholders to her communion, gives the influence of the Christianity she professes, to support slavery. The influence of the whole church which is lent to the support of slavery, by admitting slaveholders to her communion, is made up of the influence of each individual who belongs to and sustains the church ; *therefore, every individual that belongs to and supports a church that tolerates slavery, lends his influence to support slavery.*

God, by express command, *requires* us to come out from all religious associations in fellowship with sinners.

Matt. xviii. 17. "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." This is a universal rule, applicable to all offences ; and hence it is applicable to the offence of slaveholding.

1. It is not to be regarded as merely conferring a privilege, or as informing us what we *may do*, but it is to be viewed in the light of a command, imposing an obligation which *binds us in the case*. To treat such persons as the text describes in any other way than as heathen, is to violate the law of Christ.

2. To comply with this command, and treat slaveholders as we would treat a heathen man, we must withdraw from those churches which admit them to fellowship. We would not belong to a church that admitted heathen to membership and communion ; and as we are bound to treat slaveholders as we would treat a heathen man, we must be bound to retire from the church where they are admitted and fellowshipped.

Now, let us inquire what relation heathens and publicans sustained to the worshippers of the true God, in the days of our Saviour's incarnation, and what relation have they even at this day ! Were heathen and open sinners permitted to mingle in the worship of the Almighty ? No, verily. Are they now permitted to sit at the holy communion, to be members of churches, church sessions, presbyteries, conference, synods, conventions, or general assemblies ? These persons had no sort of religious connection with the worshippers of the true God, than which nothing is susceptible of clearer proof. We do not suppose that any have hardihood enough to deny the correctness of this position. Now, as the worshippers of Jehovah had no religious connection whatever—were not allowed to have any with heathen men, neither are Christians to have any with *impenitent, trespassing brethren*. And this is the sense in which we are to withdraw from pro-slavery brethren. The direction of the Saviour, in this place, means that we dissolve all religious connection with disorderly persons, and it means nothing else. This would fix the meaning of the text, if there were not another passage to the same import in the Bible ;

for, whatever is plainly, positively, and undeniably taught by any *one text* of Scripture, is true and of Divine authority; for the Scriptures contain a harmony of truth. They never contradict themselves. But this passage does not stand alone."

1 Cor. v. 5. "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such an one, no, not to eat." On this text it may be remarked,

1. That any one of the offences named brings the offender within its intent and meaning.

2. Every slaveholder comes within the meaning of the text. It not only includes all open sinners, as a general rule, but it specifically includes the sin of slaveholding. *Covetousness* and *extortion* are clearly among the attributes of slavery, and the text forbids us to keep company and eat with those who practise these.

3. Keeping company and eating with men in the sense of the text, cannot be supposed to mean more than *Christian fellowship*, or belonging to the same church with them, therefore the text clearly forbids us to belong to the same church with slaveholders; and hence, when a majority of the church persists in retaining slaveholders, *secession* is the only way left of obeying this command of God.

Here is a plain and positive command not to *eat* with certain persons—disorderly persons.

But many take the ground that we have no concern as to who goes to the communion table, so we are right ourselves. We may take the fornicator, the thief, the idolator, or the slaveholder, all clotted with human gore, by the arm, and go to the holy communion, and there, in the nearest visible approach we can make to Christ on earth, hold the closest communion with these characters that can be held out of heaven. A minister in high standing, in one of the pro-slavery churches of this land, said not long since, that he would go to the communion with the devil. But this is not the doctrine of the New Testament. If I have not misapplied this text, and I will thank any one who will prove that I have, Christians are forbidden to *EAT the Lord's supper* with any but those who give scripture evidence of piety.

2 Cor. vi. 17. "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." This is a command to Christians to come out from all association with the morally unclean and polluted, and as slavery is as great a sin, and as deeply polluting as the idolatry of the Corinthians, it is as binding on us to come out from church fellowship with slaveholders, as it was in the days of the apostle, to come out from their heathen countrymen. It is a general rule, applicable to corruption in every age, of every kind.

Here the Lord has made a separation from disorderly persons, the conditions of sonship. From all these Scriptures we prove clearly and positively, that Christians are to hold no fellowship

with disorderly brethren, or other disorderly persons ; they are not to *eat* the Lord's supper with them ; they are to have no connection with them, but such as they have with idolators and openly profane sinners. If the passages we have noticed do not prove these positions, then nothing can be proved by the scripture.

Eph. v. 2. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." On this text we would remark,

1. Slavery is, beyond all question, one of the unfruitful works of darkness.

2. To belong to a church in which slaveholding is tolerated, is to have some sort of fellowship with it, whereas the text commands us to have *no* fellowship with it.

3. The expression, "but rather reprove them," puts fellowship and reproof in opposition to each other, so that we cannot do both at the same time. It is therefore plain that to scripturally reprove slavery, we must first cease to fellowship it, by retiring from all religious association with it.

2 Thes. "Now we command you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly."

1. Slaveholders, and all who apologize for them, and advocate their right to belong to the church, walk disorderly.

2. We cannot withdraw from such only by withdrawing from those churches which tolerate slaveholding in their communion ; we are therefore commanded to secede from all pro-slavery religious associations.

God holds us responsible for the moral character of the religious associations to which we belong. We will here introduce the testimony of Mr. Watson, who is a standard author with all Episcopal Methodists, and whose testimony they must admit. Mr. Watson says,

"Every church declares, in some way, how it understands the doctrine and disciplinary laws of Christ. If fundamental error is found, the evil rests upon that church collectively, and *upon the members individually*, every one of whom is bound to try all doctrines by the Holy Scriptures, and cannot support an acknowledged system of error *without guilt*. As to discipline, the manner in which a church provides for public worship, the publication of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the instruction of the ignorant, the succor of the distressed, the admonition of the disorderly, and the excision of offenders, is its declaration of the manner in which it interprets those injunctions, which also it does on its own collective responsibility, *and that of its members*."

The simple declaration of Mr. Watson in the above extract, is, that every individual member of a church is responsible for the doctrine and discipline of the same, and, so far as they are acknowledged to be erroneous, they cannot support them "*without guilt*." Take the M. E. church then for an illustration, and it must be

seen that her doctrine, or her discipline, or both, are fundamentally wrong on the subject of slavery. Her constitutional bodies declare that slavery is right, her official organs contend that slaveholders ought not to be excluded from the church, and her highest authority declares that colored members shall not testify in church trials against the guilty. This is all wrong, and to support the church in this position, is, according to Mr. Watson, to incur individual and personal guilt. His doctrine is that when the church made these declarations, so dreadfully erroneous, she did it on the individual responsibility of every member. Whoever may be willing to stand in the breach and bear such responsibility, we are not, *we dare not!*

The church is bound, in her collective capacity; to do what her members are bound to do in their individual relations. If individuals were not bound not to hold religious connection with disorderly persons; the church would not be bound to exclude such persons from her fellowship.

The church is an institution of God, and all its rights and obligations are from the divine Institutor; none of them are acquired. They are all ordained of God, and imposed by Him on the individuals composing the church; and, as these individuals are not of the world, but chosen out of the world, the church is not of the world, but is also chosen out of the world, and, as christians are bound to come out of the world and be separate from sin and sinners, so is the church. But while the duty is the same in both, the manner of performing it differs. Individuals are to withdraw from *disorderly persons*; the church is to purge them out—exclude them from her fellowship. The church, in her first organization, is composed of persons who have come out from the world, and separated themselves from sin and sinners; hence, she has no connection with either, for the persons composing her have none.

But christians do not become free from their individual responsibility, by becoming associated in churches. They carry with them into church associations, their individual responsibilities; and whatever would be wrong in their individual relations, would be wrong in their church relations. Heaven knows us in our individual relations, and in these relations, and in these only, we will have to appear in judgment. Each will have to give an account of himself to God. The judgment of nations, and churches, &c., takes place in this world. At the judgment of the great day, the wickedness of associated bodies will rest on the individuals composing those associations. We are held individually responsible for all we do, whether in our individual or associated characters or relations. Our individual responsibility can never be lessened by entering into associations, but it may be greatly increased, and in many, very many instances, is. If ten men fall on a lonely traveller, and take his life, our laws would convict the whole number of murder; each one would be as readily hanged for murder as though

each had separately killed a man. In this case, but one murder has been committed, but ten men are guilty of murder. The guilt does not divide among the ten, but each is held by the law as guilty of the whole murder. And this would be the case, had one hundred, or even one thousand, been engaged in the foul deed. The reason of this is found in the fact, that each consented to the dark deed; and we are guilty for all the heart yields up its consent to do, when clear proof appears that the heart did so consent; and the murder of the individual in this illustration, furnishes that proof. But, in relation to our final Judge, no proof is needed; He knows what is in the heart of man, and knows what we consent to do. We see from the great moral principle on which the laws of the civilized world are based, that responsibility cannot be lessened by associations. But I have said, it may be greatly increased. If ten men may be all guilty of murder, by killing one man, on the principle that each is guilty of what he consents to do, had ten men or one hundred men been killed, on the same principle, each would be guilty of *ten, one hundred, or one thousand* murders; for each consented in his heart to the murder of all, and did his part to effect the awful crime. Now, if we are accountable before God for all we consent in our hearts to do, or to aid others in doing—and no doctrine, I humbly conceive, is more clearly taught in the Book of God than this—we are held responsible for all the wickedness done by churches, political parties, or other associations *with which we consent to act*.

This, my dear brethren, is an awful subject. I fear that human responsibility is, as yet, very imperfectly understood. The thought that we are held accountable for the evil done by those with whom we may be associated, is distressing, truly distressing; but it is *true, TRUE*. And it is to prevent these awful consequences, that we are so frequently commanded in the holy Scriptures to have no connection with the wicked—to be separate from sinners. Truly awful will be the consequences of disobeying these oft-repeated commands.

In the Presbyterian branches of the church, as also in the Methodist and Episcopalian, there is a connectional fellowship which unites all as one in the true and proper sense of christian fellowship, and this is also true of all church organizations not strictly congregational. In the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, (I mean all Presbyterian and Methodist divisions of these great sections of the church,) there is but one communion table, because these sections of the church are one,—membership in one place is membership every place. He that brings a regular certificate of membership from Charleston, S. C., or from any other place, can claim his right of membership in Pittsburgh, though he owned one thousand slaves—on that certificate he can claim his place at the communion table with our anti-slavery friends, and they have no right, or power, as Presbyterians or Methodists, to forbid him the sacrament with

them. This simple fact proves that these churches have but one communion table, which reaches all through the United States, if not beyond them, and those who go to this table, *eat* with all who *eat* at it, i. e., all the members of these denominations in the United States. It is a very great mistake to suppose we only *eat* with those who *eat* with us, in the same place, and at the same time.—This is true only of churches strictly congregational.

All Presbyterians, Methodists, and others, who have great denominational connections for legislation, judicial investigation, or government, have but *one communion table*, and he who goes to that communion in any one place, fellowships as truly all who are admitted to the one table of that denomination, as he does those he communes with at the communion in the church where he statedly worships. Those who are strictly congregational, commune with none but the members of their own immediate church; but Methodists, Presbyterians, &c., commune with all of their denomination.

The General Conference being the legislative department of the M. E. church, and that body admitting slaveholders to seats in it, every member of that church holds such a connection with slaveholders, as binds him to obey the laws they may make, and to hold his membership on conditions they may lay down.

The connections which exist in the churches just noticed, as also the connections with slaveholders, are inseparable from membership in any such church. Now, if slavery is sinful, slaveholders must be *disorderly* persons; and those who would obey the command in the text, and the voice of God, clearly expressed elsewhere in the Scriptures, have no alternative but to withdraw from pro-slavery churches; for they cannot withdraw from *disorderly* brethren, while they live in them—this is impossible.

Again: if slavery be an unfruitful work of darkness, we cannot obey the command to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, while we retain membership in a pro-slavery church; hence, we must leave such a church, if we are in it, to obey the command of God.

I will suppose a case for the sake of illustration. Ten of us unite in a church; and this number might constitute a church, as truly Christ's as any that ever existed. One of our number commits a crime, which we as christians are forbidden to fellowship—say, if you please, extortion or fornication. The offender is called to an account, and five out of the nine who try him, conclude to keep him in the church to reform him; what must the four do? They are, as are also the five, forbidden to *eat* the Lord's supper with the offender, to have any fellowship with him. They (the four pure ones) are required to withdraw from this disorderly person—to have no fellowship with this worker of darkness—and they cannot exclude him from the church; hence they must withdraw, for they must have no christian connection with the vile, impenitent

offender; they must leave the church to obey God, and save their souls. When a corrupt majority retain persons in the church, whom God forbids his *people* to fellowship, and commands them to separate—to withdraw from—his *people* must leave that church. God requires them to leave it, and they must be saved in disobedience, if they are saved in it.

Psal. L. 18. "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partakers with adulterers." No charge is here brought against the accused party, that they had committed the crime of theft or adultery, but only that they had consented with those that had committed the one, and been partakers with those who had been guilty of the other. Will it then be denied that we consent with, and are made partakers with, any class of men, when we voluntarily unite with them in the same christian church? If not, the text clearly condemns our association with slaveholders, and holds us responsible for their conduct, so far as we unite with them on terms of christian fellowship.

2 John x. 11. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

This relates to false or corrupt teachers. The command not to receive them into our houses, is not intended to prohibit us from entertaining them upon principles of charity, as we would feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, but to prohibit us from entertaining them as christians and christian ministers, by which we might give countenance to their corruptions. "He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Dr. Clarke says the words "neither bid him God speed," "mean, according to the eastern use of them, 'Have no religious connection with him, nor act towards him so as to induce others to believe you acknowledge him as a brother.'" Taking this interpretation of the words as correct, it follows that to have religious connection with men, is to become partakers of their evil deeds, and this every man does who belongs to the same church with slaveholders. Do not Methodist bishops bid slaveholders God speed, when they lay their hands upon their heads, and ordain them to the office and work of the ministry? And do not northern abolitionists bid these bishops God speed in their course, when they suffer them to lay upon their heads these same hands that have just been taken from the heads of slaveholders? And do not all the laity say, God speed to the whole operation, by suffering their own ministers to be ordained, and their own pulpits to be supplied by bishops that ordain slaveholders, and by belonging to, and supporting a church, in which slaveholders constitute a large portion of the membership and ministry? Those who can answer these questions, so as to exonerate abolition members of pro-slavery churches from responsibil-

ity, will do their cause great service by exercising their rare gifts on the subject.

Rev. ii. 14, 15. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." The charge is not for *believing* the doctrine of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitanes, but for *having those in the church* that held these doctrines; and the same principles make the church responsible so long as she has slaveholders within her pale, and those that hold that "slavery as it exists in the United States is not a moral evil."

Rev. xviii. 4. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This is spoken of mystic Babylon, and beyond all doubt it refers to some corrupt community. From it we may deduce the following propositions:

1. God may have a people in a corrupt community.
2. When a community has thus become corrupt as a body, God requires the uncorrupted portion to come out, that is secede from the corrupt majority.
3. Such as refuse to do it, by such refusal make themselves partakers of the sins of the body, and render themselves liable to the punishment due to such sins.

Here is a plain and express command from God to his people, to withdraw from a corrupt church. And what are the reasons given for the requirement? That his *people* be not partakers of the fallen church's sins, nor receive of her plagues.

I take the ground, that when a church becomes so corrupted as to place its members in christian fellowship with characters which God has forbidden his *people* to fellowship—which it would be sinful to fellowship—that church has reached the point of corruption, at which God's *people* must leave it. And when a church tolerates, sanctions, or in any way approves of sin, gives countenance or support to sin, they are also bound to leave it, else they become partakers of those sins.

We cannot remain in any of the pro-slavery churches of the land, without fellowshipping persons whom God expressly forbids his people to hold fellowship with; and slavery being a sin, and the churches giving sanction to the practice of that sin, by approving of slaveholders as acceptable ministers and members, we become partakers in that sin, if we do not come out of those churches.

God's *people* were commanded to *come out* of Babylon. And what were Babylon's sins? She traded in *slaves*, and *souls of men*.—REV. xviii. 13. Now compare Babylon, as here described, with the pro-slavery churches of this day, and you cannot fail to see that she was no worse than they are, if as bad. They who

trade in slaves, trade also in the souls of men ; for slaves are men having souls.

Trading in "*slaves and souls of men*," was Babylon's chief crime. What the members do the church does. This is especially true when the highest authorities of the church permit, allow, or sanction what they do. The members of Babylon traded in "*slaves and souls of men*," and the highest ecclesiastical body of the church, or Babylon, still allowed those who did so to retain their membership, as good and acceptable members. This tells the whole tale. And is not this the case in the pro-slavery churches of this land ? It is. The members of these churches trade in "slaves and souls of men"—have about TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS invested in immortal souls, for whom Christ died, some of whom are the members of Christ's mystical body, "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," "heirs to a crown of glory which fadeth not away ;" these they sell like brute beasts, with "*beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots*." Babylon did no more. Hell could ask no more. In this one particular, and the main one too, there is an exact agreement.

But it is important to our inquiry, to know if the slavery in which Babylon traded differed from American slavery ; and if it did, was it more or less sinful ? Mr. Wesley said that American slavery was the "vilest that ever saw the sun." He is good authority, at least with Methodists. But facts are authority with all. The period of Babylon's trading in "*slaves and souls of men*," must be one of two, from about A. D. 1000 to 1300, or from 1521 to the present period ; as these are the only periods the members of the Church of Rome were engaged to any considerable extent in slavery and the slave trade. The slavery of the first period differed from American slavery in many important particulars, and the difference is all against us. Slaves, then, could be sold only with the soil ; the soil and slaves could not be separated ; where the slave was born, there he died. Under that system, families could never be broken up. Husbands and wives, parents and children, could live, and die together ; they could lighten each other's burdens by tender sympathies, by interchange of love. The wife had, in the hour of distress, a husband's bosom to confide in ; the husband, in his afflictions, a wife's heart to feel for him ; the son, a father's council to guide him ; the daughter, a mother's tenderness to watch over her, and a mother's bosom to dry her tears in, when heart-broken and afflicted. But none of these sweets mingle in the bitter cup in America. Here the demon hand of oppression seizes the web into which is woven all the sympathies and loves of social life, and tears it in pieces,—separates for life husbands and wives, parents and children, prostrates all that can impart any joy to human life. Then, masters might whip their slaves, but they dare not employ another to do it ; all the whipping that was done, was done by the master's own hand. Now, the master may employ

as many unfeeling wretches as he may choose, and by hired hands, whip his slave to death. Then, slaves were admitted as parties at law, and could implead their own masters; then, law regulated slavery, and the slave could appeal to it in his own person, and obtain redress. Now, a slave cannot be a party in any suit at law whatever—now, the avarice, cupidity and lust of the master regulate slavery, and from these the slave has no appeal. Then, slaves were allowed their oaths against their master—now denied them against any white person. Then, the chastity of female slaves was protected by law; if a master offered an insult to the chastity of his female slave, she obtained her freedom by making oath to that fact. Now, if she does not yield to the criminal desires of her master, she may be whipped to death, if no white person be present, or sold to some distant land for a harlot. From these facts, we see that the churches of our land trade in a system of slavery far more wicked than Babylon traded in; and if God's *people* could not remain in church relations with those who practised the less sin or evil, without being partakers of the church's sin, much less can they, if they continue in connection with the greater.

And now, dear brethren, I ask you to look at this whole subject in the fear of God, and in reference to your soul's salvation: let each one ask himself the question, can I be guiltless, holding fellowship with those who trade in *slaves and souls of men*? Can I, dare I, sin against God, in remaining in a pro-slavery church?

But it may be said *we are bound to do all the good we can in the world, and if we can do more good by staying in a pro-slavery church than by leaving it, are we not bound to stay?*

It is true that we are bound to do all the good we can; but it is equally true, that we can do no good by disobeying the commands of God. To talk of weighing probabilities of doing good in disobedience to God's commands, and to admit that it is possible to do more good by disobeying the Most High, than by obeying him, is monstrous. This objection takes this ground: that though God says, "come out of her, my *people*," they have a right to reply, we think we can do more good by staying in, and therefore ought not to come out. God says, withdraw from every disorderly brother; the objectors say, Lord, I can do more good by staying with him. The Lord says, let certain persons be to you as heathen men; the objectors say, Lord, I can do more good by letting them be to me as christian men. The Lord says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; the objectors say, I can do more good by having the closest fellowship with them. The Lord says, no not to *eat* the feast of unleavened bread with fornicators &c.: the objectors say, Lord, I can do more good by *eating* it with them. Thus the plain commands of God are set at naught, with the professed object of pleasing him and doing good; and not only so, we are held bound thus to disobey our Maker. And yet this

objection is urged by ministers of the sanctuary, in the light of the nineteenth century.

Ought we not to keep slaveholders in our Christian fellowship, to secure our influence over them for good?

Let us apply the doctrine of this objection to some other sinners. We will keep drunkards in the church, to secure our influence over them, and make them better to their families. We will keep in fornicators for the same reason; if we turn them out, they will give unrestrained indulgence to their passions, and treat their poor wives worse. We will keep thieves and liars in, to secure our influence over them, and to make them all good in the end. This is the doctrine which is brought to support slavery. But this is not all; if we should keep such characters in the church to reform them, we ought to take such in for the very same reason, and not only keep the door of the church open, but take into her arms an unsaved world, with all its abominations. And this is the practice on the subject of slavery: not only are those who are slaveholders kept in, but all who offer are taken in, if there be no other objection. According to this doctrine, we ought to have all the sinners in the world in the church, to secure religious influence over them. Is this the doctrine of the Saviour? No, verily!

The church is my mother, and it would be ungrateful in me to forsake my mother. Ought I not to cleave to my mother?

God's children are not orphans, they have a father as well as a mother. They are bound to obey their father, even God. Now suppose my mother should go a whoring after strange gods, must I forsake and disobey my father, and follow her? I trow not. Christians must obey God; and if the church become so corrupt that we cannot stay in it without disobeying God, we must leave it. I fear those who have so much to say about their obligations to the church, and so little to say about their obligations to the Redeemer, are not the children of God—have not the religion of Jesus, but are orphans—have no father, are children of the church—have church religion. We are bound to love our mother, the church, so long as she is true and faithful to our father, God, but no longer.

“Mr. Wesley was opposed to leaving the church, and preached and published a sermon against schism. Mr. Wesley was no seceder.”

Why then should I secede?

A.—Mr. Wesley in his sermon on schism preached the very doctrine here advanced. He says most emphatically, that when a church requires its members to do something forbidden by the word of God, or places them in circumstances in which they cannot do what God's word enjoins, or must do what his word forbids, then, and in that case, they are not only free to withdraw from that church, but are bound by the law of the Most High to do it, and to do it immediately too; and the ruinous effects of separation, which he portrays in glowing colors, lie all at the door of the

church.—See Sermon on Schism, vol. 2, page 165, par. 17. We cannot stay in a pro-slavery church, without doing what God's word forbids, and leaving undone what it enjoins; hence, according to Mr. Wesley's sermon, we are bound to leave such churches.

Christ ate the holy sacrament of the supper with Judas, who had a devil. Can we then be bound not to eat it with wicked persons?

Judas did not eat the supper with the Saviour, or any other person. By comparing Luke xxiii. from 14 to 21, with John xiii. from 26 to 31, it will be seen that the supper was instituted after the eating of the passover, and that Judas left the Saviour and the disciples while they were eating the passover, or immediately at the close; so that he was not present at the sacrament of the supper.

If the fact that the sin of slavery is in the Church renders it a duty to secede, then the existence of any other sin in the Church must force us to the same result; and as there is no church which has not sin and sinners in it, how can we belong to any church on earth?

Secession is not urged because the sin of slavery is *in the Church*, but because it is *TOLERATED in the Church*, or because it is *knowingly and publicly* suffered to exist in the Church. Did any other sin exist in the Church, under the same circumstances, equally known to the Church and the world, and by the *same toleration*, it would equally demand secession on the part of all those who are opposed to association with sinners. Take an illustration: Suppose we belong to a local church or religious society. Suppose an individual member of such church knows that another member is guilty of stealing a sheep—the crime cannot be worse than to steal a man. He goes to the church with his complaint that A. has stolen a sheep, but for want of proof, he fails to convince the church that Br. A. is guilty, though he is sure of his guilt. These facts may not justify secession, because the church does not sanction theft; they would expel A. if they were convinced of his guilt, and they would be convinced of his guilt, if reasonable evidence were laid before them. But suppose the accuser convinces the church that A. has really stolen the sheep, and they refuse, or a majority of them, to expel him, on the ground that *it is not improper for sheep-stealers to belong to the church*,—the body then assumes the responsibility of sheep-stealing, and every member who would not share that responsibility must secede. This is precisely the ground on which we urge secession for the sin of slavery; it is not because it has got into the Church, and lies concealed beyond detection, but because it is suffered *publicly to exist* in the Church, on the ground that it is *right* to retain slaveholders in the Church. If it can be shown, that any other sin exists in the Church, by the same *public toleration*, it will furnish another unanswerable reason for secession.

It is sometimes urged that, if we are bound to secede from the Church, because it tolerates slavery, for the same reason must we secede from the civil compact, because government tolerates slavery. How is this?

1. The principles involved in the two cases are not the same. Membership in civil society does not involve Christian fellowship, and is not understood by the world as endorsing the character and sentiments of the other members of such civil society, or the laws and administration ; but membership in a church does imply Christian fellowship, and a sanction of the laws and government of the same, so far as moral principle is concerned. We may belong to a church, and not endorse every thing on the ground of expediency ; many prudential rules may exist which we may think are not the best, yet to belong to a church is to endorse its principles and government, so far as to say they are not wicked,—but such is not the case with the membership in civil society ; it is not so understood by the world.

2. If the objection be well-founded, if it be true that if sin in the Church makes it our duty to secede, it must also be our duty to secede from civil society, because such sin exists in civil society, it must follow that we are no more responsible for the sin that exists in the Church, to which we belong, than we are for the sin that exists in the civil society in which we live. This is not only contrary to every man's common sense, but it must involve the following consequence. As, not only slaveholders, but as thieves, liars, drunkards, whore-masters and murderers, all belong to civil society, we must either secede from civil society, or we are at liberty to remain members of a Church where all these characters are admitted. There is no way to evade the force of this but to admit that sin in the Church may render it our duty to secede, which does not render it our duty to withdraw from civil society, the same sin existing there, in which case the whole objection is given up.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1. *By adhering to such a church we violate all those scriptures which speak of church order and discipline.* That Christian churches under the apostolic government, were designed to include none but Christians in heart and life, will not be denied, and that the scriptures contain rules for separating the unworthy from their communion is equally plain. These rules are of such a character as to prove it wrong for us to remain in Christian association with known offenders. Among these texts are Matt. xviii. 15, 17 ; Rom. xvi. 17 ; 1 Cor. v. 5, 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14 ; “ Let him be unto thee as an heathen man ”—“ Avoid them ”—“ Deliver such an one unto Satan ”—“ Not to keep company ”—“ Withdraw yourselves ”—“ Have no company with him ”—these are all expressions which imply expulsion or secession, and prove beyond a doubt that, as Christians, we are bound to withdraw from the associations of all unworthy persons, or exclude them from our associations. This remark is to be applied only to Christians or

church associations, the members of which, by the law of Christ and by the common sentiments of the world, constitute a common brotherhood. To remain in such associations with open offenders, as all slaveholders and their apologists are, is a direct violation of the law of Christ. It is worthy of remark that the language of scripture sometimes favors the idea of expulsion, and sometimes secession or a withdrawing on the part of the pure. This leaves us to make our own election under the circumstances of the case, exercising our best judgment in the fear of God ; but where corruption exists, we must do one or the other. Now in the case before us, the expulsion of slaveholders and their apologists is not practicable, as they are far the strongest party, and have the constitution and government of the church on their side, under which circumstances our only means of obeying the law of Christ is secession.

2. *By remaining in such a church we render ourselves liable to all the maledictions implied in those scriptures which hold us responsible for the associations we sustain, and the influence we thereby exert.* The following are a few texts of this class : Psa. l. 18. "When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers." Slaveholders sustain both theft and adultery. Prov. xxix. 24. "Whoso is partaker with a thief hateth his own soul."

We cannot see how we could more effectually be partakers with thieves than by uniting with slaveholders in a common brotherhood to promote religion.

Isa. i. 23. "Thy princes are companions of thieves." If slaveholders be thieves, which cannot be denied, the princes (chief ministers) of the M. E. church are most notoriously the companions of thieves. Eph. v. 6, 7. "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience ; be not ye therefore partakers with them." 1. Tim. v. 22. "Neither be partakers of other men's sins ; keep thyself pure." 2 John 11. "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Rev. ii. 20. "I have a few things against thee because thou sufferest that woman Jezabel to teach and seduce my servants." Was that worse than for the M. E. church to suffer slaveholders, men-stealers, to teach ? Verse 15. "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Was that worse than the doctrine of slavery ? Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

And now, my dear brethren, having laid this most important subject before you in the plainest manner I am able, you must come to your own conclusions of duty from the arguments presented. I know the truth, in this case, has fearful odds to contend with ; church attachments are powerful ; we have many friends in these churches whom we love, and whom we ought to

love ; these it will be hard to separate from. In these circumstances, Satan will try to bind us to sin, the vilest sin, slavery, by the very cords which bind us to God's people and to God's church. Shun this snare. Let not feeling enter the mind while this great question is under examination. Make up your mind as to what is duty—what God requires. This done, recollect that he who hesitates between duty and inclination is undone. O ! brethren, I feel for you ! I tremble for you ! There are few, very few questions on which it is so difficult to act right, as on this. May the Most High God and Saviour aid you to do your duty on this most important, most difficult subject, that you may stand before him at last, without spot and blameless, which may the Lord grant for his name and mercy's sake. *Amen.*

M. E. CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

SECTION I.

THE LAITY EXCLUDED.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, has for some years, been greatly agitated by a controversy on the subject of church government.

This controversy has resulted in a considerable secession from the Church.

The people were never consulted at the organization of the M. E. church, they had no representative present : but a few ministers, of themselves, in the city of Baltimore, in 1784, framed the government without the concurrence or consent of the people, and have held with tenacious grasp ever since, all legislative, judicial, and executive prerogatives.

By virtue of this usurped authority, this body has imposed upon the Church *articles of faith*, without either their advice or concurrence, and thus has interfered with the free exercise of conscience and the right of private judgment, on the part of the laity, and in respect to matters with which their personal salvation is inseparably identified. What more has the Roman Catholic Church itself done than this, in controlling the faith of its members ?

They did not embrace and approve of this kind of government, in the act of joining the church, for not one in a hundred, if one in a thousand, thought anything about the principles of government when uniting with the church, but were influenced in this act by entirely different considerations. Neither do they approve of this kind of government by continuing in the church; as a large majority in the church do not understand the principles of their own government, nor the government of reformers, or of the difference between them; and among those who are acquainted with them, perhaps there is a majority in favor of reform.

They may probably be influenced to this course from a number of considerations, foreign to the government; such is their attachment to favorite ministers; an unwillingness to interrupt old associations and attachments. Some may be influenced by the argument taken from *numbers* and *popularity*; others may think they can succeed better in their temporal avocations, and that it will best subserve their secular interests, to belong to so large a community; others, again, do not like to leave the meeting-houses which their money has built; and not among the least, is a fear that the new church will not succeed—which fear ought now to be abandoned.

SECTION II.

EPISCOPACY.

Methodist Episcopacy was established by Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury. Mr. Wesley did not consecrate Dr. Coke a Bishop, as has been asserted. We have no proof that he ever made such an *attempt*—and had he done so he could not have succeeded; for he never was a Bishop himself. He could not therefore confer powers he did not possess. But he could and did appoint Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury joint superintendents of the Methodist societies in North America.

Mr. Wesley did set apart Dr. Coke by the imposition of hands: but this ceremony, though it generally accompanies ordination, does not prove anything in itself. It was a ceremony which, in the days of the apostles, accompanied appointments to office, where no *ministerial function* was either conferred or recognized. It was also a common ceremony which accompanied the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Again, Mr. Wesley, as the father and founder of the Methodist societies, often exercised the right of sending his preachers to particular fields of labor, and in doing so, he frequently laid his hands upon them in token of his blessing; and this practice he professed to have derived from Acts xxxiii. 3. In one of his letters he thus speaks,—“Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work to which they were called. This was *not* ordaining

them—it was only inducting them to the province for which our Lord had appointed them.”

Mr. Wesley in his letter of appointment puts himself and Dr. Coke on a level, as it regards grades in the ministry. He applies the term *presbyter* to both. Mr. Wesley, as the father of the whole Methodist family, simply “appointed,” “set apart,” Dr. Coke to “superintend” and “preside over” a portion of his great family. This is all that can fairly be gathered from the commission of Dr. Coke.

Mr. Wesley gave (in this letter of appointment) as one reason for the step he then took, that the Methodists in North America desired “to continue under his care, and *still adhere* to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England.”

We cannot suppose that he would violate his solemn ordination vows, by ordaining a Bishop, while he was only a presbyter, and also that he would trample on the discipline of the church to which the “people still wished to adhere,” by thrusting upon the societies a *Bishop* of his own creating, contrary to the discipline of said church.

Mr. Wesley undoubtedly intended that Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury should ordain other presbyters. The necessities of the case he supposed would justify, in America, this departure from English usage; but he could plead no such necessity for making a *Bishop*—believing as he did, “that Bishops and presbyters were of the same order and had the same right to ordain.” He did not confer upon Dr. Coke any additional *ordination power*, but merely set him apart to superintend the flock of Christ. Mr. Wesley did not anticipate that Coke and Asbury would assume and exercise the office of Bishops, and organize a separate and distinct *Methodist Episcopal Church*.

He expected both preachers and people would continue under *his* care, and “still adhere to the *discipline*” of the established church. And when Mr. Wesley found that his superintendents had taken the name of Bishops, he wrote to Asbury a letter, of which the following is an extract. “How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a Bishop? I shudder, I start, at the very thought; men may call me a knave, or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content. But they shall never, by my consent, call me a Bishop. For my sake, for God’s sake, for Christ’s sake, put a full end to this. JOHN WESLEY.”—(*Moore’s Life of Wesley*, vol. 2, p. 285.)

It was not the *name* merely to which Mr. Wesley objected; as the name was *scriptural*, he certainly could not object, as a churchman, to their being called by a name which exactly designated their office. It is ridiculous to suppose that after he had made them *Bishops*, he so pointedly condemned them for taking the *name*! Such a supposition is contrary to Mr. Wesley’s whole character.

There is evidence that Dr. Coke never considered himself a Bishop in the Episcopal sense. He appears never to have been satisfied with his Episcopal authority. He wrote a letter to Bishop White, dated Richmond, April 24, 1791, nearly *seven years after* Mr. Wesley had made him a Bishop, making a formal proposition for a re-union of the Methodists in America with the Protestant Episcopal Church! He wrote to Bishop Seabury, of Connecticut, about the same time, making a similar proposition.

In the former of these letters he expressed the opinion that he "went farther in the separation" of the Methodists from the Established Church than Mr. Wesley intended—that Mr. Wesley "did not intend an entire separation"—that Mr. Wesley himself "went farther than he would have gone, if he had foreseen *some events which followed!*"—and that he is now sorry for the separation. How much does this look like constituting Dr. Coke a Bishop to form a separate Methodist Episcopal Church? These "certain events which followed," were, doubtless, the assumption of the name and office of Bishops, on the part of Coke and Asbury, and their consequent proceedings! In this letter, Dr. Coke styles himself a "Presbyter of the Church of England," and states that about 130 preachers had been ordained, and that "the generality, and perhaps none of them would refuse to submit to a *re-ordination.*" So much for the satisfaction of the preachers at that early day with ordination from Mr. Wesley's Bishops! In his letter to Bishop Seabury, which Dr. Coke read to Bishop White, he suggested that in case of a re-union, "*there would be use in consecrating Mr. Asbury to the Episcopacy*—and that although there would not be the same reasons in his, (Dr. Coke's case,) because he was a resident of England; yet as he should probably, while he lived, occasionally visit America, it would not be fit, considering he was Mr. Asbury's senior, that he should appear in *lower character* than this gentleman." Hence it seems that Mr. Wesley's Bishops were only Presbyters after all—and that to be *true Episcopal Bishops* they needed, in the opinion of Dr. Coke, a new consecration.

As lately as 1813, Dr. Coke applied to Wm. Wilberforce and several other distinguished gentlemen in England, for an appointment to the Episcopacy of India, and promising, if he could obtain that appointment, he would return to the bosom of the church, and do all in his power to promote her interests. It is as clear as the sun, that Dr. Coke never considered himself properly a Bishop, though this appears to have been the height of his ambition. "If the less can bless the greater;" if presbyters can make Bishops, then has Methodist Episcopacy something to stand upon, though it owes its existence more to these *self-styled Bishops*, Coke and Asbury, than to John Wesley.

Mr. Wesley in page 314, vol. vii. of his works, thus states the

whole case. "Hence those who had been members of the church, had none either to administer the Lord's Supper, or to baptize their children." Judging this to be a case of real necessity, I took a step which, for peace and quietness, I had refrained from taking for many years ; I exercised that power which, I am fully persuaded, the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls has given me. *I appointed three of our laborers* to go and help them, by not only preaching the word of God, but *likewise, by administering the Lord's Supper, and baptizing their children*, throughout that vast tract of land—a thousand miles long, and some hundreds broad." The same facts are referred to as the cause of Mr. Wesley's action in this case, in his Life by Coke and Moore. They there state "that Mr. Asbury informed Mr. Wesley of the extreme uneasiness of the people's minds for want of the sacraments ; that thousands of their children were unbaptized, and that the members of the society in general, had not taken the Lord's Supper for years !" Again, in his own circular upon this subject, Mr. Wesley says, "For some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or administer the sacraments ; *here, therefore, my scruples are at an end*, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending *laborers into the harvest*." This then was his object, and he incidentally cites the practice of the Alexandrian Church, as sustaining him in the *ordination he performed*. Such a reference, however, would not have been revelant, had he ordained a Bishop, as the Bishops of that church were elected by the *whole church previously to being* ordained by the elders. Can any one believe that, *at that time*, Mr. Wesley intended to assert and defend his right to originate an Episcopacy ? Is there *another place* in his voluminous works, where such a right is even adverted to ? We believe there is *not one*. It is evident that the sublime conception of Methodist Episcopacy had not then entered his mind : when it was forced upon him, we *know how he expressed himself with regard to it*.

The case of Scotland was similar to that of America. The societies in Scotland were without any to administer the sacraments, and many members had been lost in consequence. Hence he says in his Journal, "Aug. 1, 1785. Having, with a few selected friends, weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgment, and set apart three of our well tried preachers, to minister in Scotland." Again, in his works, page 314, vol. vii. he says, "After Dr. (not Bishop) Coke's return from America, many of our friends begged I would consider the case of Scotland." Then, after mentioning the evil arising from the want of ordained ministers there, he adds, "To prevent this, I at length consented to TAKE THE SAME STEP WITH REGARD TO SCOTLAND, AS I HAD DONE WITH REGARD TO AMERICA !" The three preachers referred to, were undoubtedly intended to *superintend* the societies in Scotland, which were, shortly after this, divided into three circuits.

So far was Mr. Wesley from originating any Episcopal establishment "to supersede the P. E. Church," that, in the same document, he (Mr. W.) says, "Whatever then is done, EITHER IN AMERICA OR SCOTLAND, IS NO SEPARATION FROM THE Church of England. I have no thought of this!" The "SAME STEP" with regard to Scotland as America.

If he took the *same steps* with regard to Scotland as America, and ordained no Bishops for the former place, is it not very strange that the ministers of the M. E. church should *persist* in asserting that Mr. Wesley is the author of *Methodist Episcopacy*? It certainly is; and it cannot be accounted for only on the ground of *ignorance, prejudice or dishonesty!*

It appears from "Lee's History of Methodism," that when the society was first organized under Messrs. Coke and Asbury, these gentlemen were not known as Bishops. The title was not assumed until *about three years after the organization, and then without the knowledge or consent of the conference.* We know, too, that *many of the preachers were opposed to the change,* and that after considerable debate a vote was passed, NOT APPROVING OF THE ACT, *but acceding to the request of the superintendents, upon Mr. Asbury's explanation of the term, to allow it to remain."* Mr. Wesley's letter to Asbury appears to have been despatched immediately after this, namely, in 1788. So that he lost no time in endeavoring to correct the evil.

Dr. Coke never was received in England as a Bishop.

About five months after Mr. Wesley's death, the Conference assembled. This was in 1791. Dr. Coke, who had been seven years a Bishop, was present. But he did not preside as Bishop, nor yet as superintendent. He did not *preside* at all. William Thompson was chosen President, and Dr. Coke *Secretary.* The next year, Alexander Mather was chosen President, and Dr. Coke *Secretary.* And the three following Conferences, Dr. Coke acted not as Bishop, not as President, but as *Secretary.*

Some of the Wesleyan preachers supposed Mr. Wesley had *attempted* to make a Bishop; others considered it a kind of Presbyterian ordination. They were all thunderstruck! The thing was done in a *private chamber!* One of the preachers, when he heard of the transaction, said, "It is a new mode of ordination, to be sure, on the *Presbyterian* plan." Another said, "It is neither *Episcopal* nor *Presbyterian*, but a mere hodge-podge of inconsistency."

The M. E. church holds to two orders in the ministry theoretically; three practically. Methodist Bishops are inducted to the Episcopacy by a *triple* ordination. The forms for the ordination of a Bishop are more pompous than those of an elder. The pretence that all this parade is only to ordain to an *office*, (not an order,) is a miserable shift to avoid an obvious difficulty.

To admit that a Bishop is superior in *order*, would be to admit

that John Wesley made a greater man than himself,—or that Coke created himself a Bishop, and then created the triple crown for Asbury. To deny that a Bishop is superior in any sense to a presbyter, would be to lower down the Episcopal standard,—hence this dodging and trimming between *office* and *order*. It is a mere play upon words—a distinction without a difference.

As a presiding elder is next in office to a Bishop, and superior in many respects to other elders, why not ordain him? Echo answers *why!*

The Episcopal Methodists would never have had any doubts about a *third order*, had their Episcopacy come from a regular Bishop of the established church.

The *usages* of the established church are more consistent with her doctrine of a *third order*, than are those of the M. E. church with her doctrine of but *two orders*.

If the bishopric is only an *office* in the church, it is about the *seventh*, in the room of the third. 1. Class-leader. 2. Exhorter. 3. Local preacher. 4. Junior preacher. 5. Preacher in charge. 6. Presiding elder. 7. BISHOP! But the *bishopric* is the *only office* that happens to be ordained. Such an ordination to *office* merely, is supremely ridiculous!

SECTION III.

GENERAL AND ANNUAL CONFERENCES, COMPOSITION, POWERS, &c.

The laws of the M. E. church are made by the General Conference.

The General Conference is composed of travelling preachers.

The travelling clergy, by their delegates in General Conference, control the entire church both in respect to its "*faith and practice*," and hereby destroy the very foundations of all religious liberty, and provide a basis for rearing up an absolute despotism.

The members of the General Conference are appointed by the Annual Conferences.

The Annual Conferences are composed exclusively of travelling preachers.

No one can be elected a member of the General Conference but a travelling preacher.

No one can vote for members of the General Conference but travelling preachers.

It may be emphatically called a government of travelling preachers.

The local ministers and members have no representatives in the law-making department.

It is denied that they have any right, either natural or acquired, to representation. (See the report of the General Conference of 1828.)

The travelling preachers assumed the power to legislate for the local preachers and members.

It is upon such principles and with such powers, that the *legislative* department of the M. E. church is constituted; principles and powers at utter variance with human rights and the heaven-sanctioned equality of the Christian brotherhood. Look at it, reader, and say if you know of a parallel, either civil or religious, except among the absolute despotisms of the Old World?

The local ministers and members have no negative on the laws, which are to affect their property, persons, and reputation.

To object to, or reason against them, is called sowing dissension and inveighing against discipline.

The penalty annexed to this alleged crime of sowing dissension and inveighing against discipline is expulsion from the church.

Persons can be expelled by this rule of discipline from the M. E. church, without being charged with a breach of the laws of Jesus Christ.

SECTION IV.

BISHOPS AND PRESIDING ELDERS; APPOINTMENT, POWERS, ETC.

The Bishops are appointed by the travelling preachers.

They hold their office during life, unless removed for crime.

There are about 4000 preachers whose itinerant destiny is placed in the hands of the Bishops.

They have no appeal from the Bishop's decision; they must either go to their appointments or leave the itinerant ranks.

This places the preachers in a state of dependence on Episcopal power.

They can favor or oppress them, in giving them good or bad appointments, keep them near home or send them afar off. They may be under the necessity, sometimes, of learning obedience by the things they suffer.

The Bishops from these circumstances, acquire very great influence over the preachers and people.

This was exemplified in the General Conference of 1820, in putting down what were afterwards called the suspended resolutions, after they were carried by a majority of upwards of two-thirds of the General Conference.

The New Testament gives no account of such prerogatives being claimed or possessed by Bishops; and Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, published by the M. E. church, (vol. 1, p. 91,) states, that "a Bishop in the first ages of the Christian Church, was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which at that time was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house." Again, in the same volume, (p. 88,) Mosheim says, "the rulers of the church were called either pres-

byters or Bishops, which two titles were undoubtedly applied to the same person."

The most alarming prerogatives of Methodist Bishops are—

1. Their power to gag and put down the annual conferences. This power they exercised from 1836 to 1840 on the slave question particularly. Their *right* to prevent an annual conference from expressing a sentiment by resolution or report on what they considered an important moral question, was warmly contested. The General Conference, however, of 1840, approved their course, and gave them this power by *express provision*. This prerogative they have exercised since the last General Conference. Thus an annual conference of 200 members, many of whom are older, and perhaps wiser and better than some of the Bishops, however much they may feel impressed that they ought to express a sentiment on a moral enterprise, may be prevented by the Bishop, if he pleases to pronounce the proposition unconstitutional or out of order; and admitting no appeal from his decision, he may thus trample on the consciences of his brethren and do it according to *Methodist Episcopal law*! And this is the *monster* which, if you touch, you are, in the opinion of a million souls, *piercing your Holy Mother*!

In 1842, at the session of the New England Conference, in Springfield, Mass., Bishop Waugh presided.

The following resolution was introduced, which the Bishop refused to put, and stated that it was "too late in the day to give his reasons" for such refusal!

"*Resolved*, That it is the solemn conviction of the New England Annual Conference, that all slaveholding, that is, all recognition of the right of property in human beings, is contrary to the laws of nature and religion, and ought therefore to be discouraged by all wise and prudent means."

How is it possible for a resolution to be more mildly worded than the above? How reasonable that such a resolution should have passed! How cruel and tyrannical the refusal! As lately as 1842, a body of Christian ministers denied the privilege of uttering the above language! Their rights and consciences trampled under foot by his Holiness in the chair!

And yet ten thousand preachers, travelling and local, and a million members, submit in silence to such treatment—to such a government!! The same power and prerogatives which the Bishops have in the annual conferences, about two hundred presiding elders have in the quarterly conferences—and they have often exercised them.

No matter how much any people may desire a particular preacher—no matter how much the preacher may wish to serve the people; unless the Bishop *please*, they cannot be gratified—and he don't always please, in such cases. No matter how much they

may remonstrate against his being stationed with them ; if the Bishop pleases, they *must* take him.

I will give a few instances, out of scores that might be selected to show what a mild clever little thing this Methodist Episcopacy is—and how it regards the rights and consciences of the ministry and laity.

At the session of the New York Conference in 1839, it was in some way intimated to the Washington Street Church, in Brooklyn, L. I., that the Rev. B. Griffin was to be appointed to that charge. The church accordingly, though a committee appointed for the purpose, presented itself before the Bishop and remonstrated against Mr. Griffin's being sent to them as their pastor. But the remonstrance was disregarded, and Mr. Griffin was stationed at Washington Street.

At the session of the New England Conference, in 1841, both of the large societies in Lowell, Mass., petitioned for particular preachers, but they were told that they should not have the men they asked for. One of the churches [St. Paul's] then requested to be left without a supply by the Bishop, having made arrangements to employ a local preacher. But the Bishop regarded not the request, but *forced* a preacher upon them. In both these cases the preachers petitioned for, also added their request to the voice of the churches, so that the wishes of both preachers and people were disregarded.

Wesley Chapel Station, after being denied the preacher they wanted, selected some four or five others, and stated to the Bishop that they would be satisfied with either of them. But no ; they *must not* have either. And to cap the climax of insult, the very man was sent them to whom they had *objected*, either officially or unofficially.

One circumstance connected with the Lowell churches ought not to be overlooked. In consequence of rejecting their preachers and electing others, they were publicly declared, through Zion's Herald, to be without the pale of the church. This was done by the two rejected preachers, with the approbation of the presiding elder, in a note appended to the Episcopal Bull. A very few who adhered to the rejected preachers, escaped these maledictions. This alarming step of dismembering whole churches without the forms of trial, developes another of the alarming features of Methodist economy—especially when it is considered that the subject was carried up to the Bishop, and he approved of the course of the preachers and pronounced it METHODISM !

Thus the doctrine is established, that when an M. E. society *dares* to reject their preacher, it may be dismembered at a blow ! Who can desire membership in such a church ? True, these excinded churches, by reconsidering certain resolutions which gave some offence to the Episcopacy, were graciously taken back again, *en masse*, by these divines, with another stroke of their Episcopal

pens. A new way this to expel and receive churches—but it is pronounced to be **METHODISM!** Good Lord deliver us from such Methodism as this! *It is not Wesleyan Methodism!*

The Chesnut Street M. E. Church, in the city of Providence, was treated by the Bishops in a similar manner, about the time of their rejection of the Lowell proscriptions—viz., in June, 1841. This was a large church, and it had fixed on a particular preacher. The request was unanimous; but it was rejected. The consequence was a secession, which has resulted in the organization of a Wesleyan church, with a new and beautiful house of worship, all paid for, I believe.

2. The power which the Bishops have to transfer men from one end of the continent to the other, and that contrary to their wishes, is wrong. That they have *power* to transfer the whole or any portion of the New England Conference to South Carolina, and bring preachers from that Conference to New England, will not be denied. Bishop Hedding has openly published this doctrine to the world. He says, in his address on the Discipline, as the only sure method of curing “heresy,” and other evils, “Let the General Conference command the *Bishops* to remove the corrupted majority of an Annual Conference to other parts of the work, and scatter them among Annual Conferences, where they will be *governed*, and supply their places with better men from other Conferences. But such men would not go at the appointment of the Bishop. Perhaps they would not personally; but their *names* and their *membership* would go where they could be dealt with as their sins deserve. *It is true the Bishops have authority to do this, and in some cases it might be their duty to do it, without the command of the General Conference.*”

What a tremendous power for seven men to exercise over 4000 of their brethren in the ministry! How dangerous—how contrary to liberty of conscience! And yet scores of young ministers are annually bowing their necks at the feet of the Episcopacy, and taking upon them “ordination vows,” which oblige them to obey their chief ministers—without making any provision for the exercise of a “good conscience towards God!”

SECTION V.

RECEPTION AND EXPULSION OF MEMBERS, &C.

Members are received into the M. E. church by the *preacher in charge*; and though this is generally (not always) done in presence of the society, there is no rule to prevent him from receiving members obnoxious to the majority. All the class leaders are appointed by *him*, and no steward *can* be appointed without *his* nomination. And all new boards of Trustees must be appointed by him or the presiding elder. The pulpits of all the Episcopal

Methodist churches, built on the plan of the discipline, are entirely under the control of the bishops and clergy.

The funds of the M. E. church, amounting to near a million of dollars, is the exclusive property of the preachers! Out of these funds the bishops are served first, and then their cringing vassals. The entire property of the church, including meeting-houses, cannot be less than five or six millions of dollars—probably more. The use of this vast sum is entirely under the control of the bishops and their agents—the traveling preachers!

In the trial of members the preacher in charge has the right to bring the accused before a committee of *his own creating*; and in case of an appeal to the quarterly conference, he can carry the matter as he pleases—as he can change all the leaders, if need be, any moment.

Let Episcopal Methodists beware how they offend the preacher in charge, as he can dismember them almost with a nod. And the preacher must be equally cautious how he offends his presiding elder. And the presiding elder must take heed to his steps that he keep in the good graces of “his holiness,” as he is entirely his creature—and can be made his agent even contrary to the expressed will of both preachers and people. The government of the M. E. church is, therefore, a government of bishops!

SECTION VI.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE M. E. CHURCH CONTRASTED WITH THE SCRIPTURES AND THE USAGES OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

There is no warrant in Scripture, or the usages of the primitive church, for the Methodist Episcopal form of government. (See Matt. xx. 25, 27. Chap. xxiii. 8, 12. Chap. vii. 12. See also, the following extract from Mosheim’s Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1, 87;) “In those early times, every Christian church consisted of the people, their leaders, and the ministers and deacons; and these, indeed, belong essentially to every religious society. The people were undoubtedly the first in authority, for the Apostles themselves showed by their examples, that nothing of moment was to be carried on, or determined, without the consent of the assembly:* and this method of proceeding was both prudent and necessary, in these critical times.” It was therefore the assembly of the people which chose their own rulers and teachers, or received them by a free and authoritative consent, when recommended by others. The same people rejected or confirmed, by their suffrages, the laws that were proposed by their rulers to the assembly, excommunicated profligate or unworthy members of the

* Acts i. 15. vi. 3. xv. 4, xxi. 22.

church, restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges, passed judgment on the different subjects of controversy and dissension that arose in their community : examined and decided the disputes which happened between the elders and deacons ; and, in a word, exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power."

Lord King says, in his account of the Primitive Church :

" But as for the *legislative, decretive or judicatorial* power, that appertained *both to clergy and laity* who conjointly made up that *supreme consistorial court*, which was in *every parish*," &c. (Page 99.)

Nothing is plainer, both from Scripture and the early Christian writers, than that the laity constituted an essential part of the councils of the church. But the laymen in the M. E. church, as we have seen, have no part either in her legislative or judicial assemblies. The doctrine of the predominant priesthood, in respect to this participation of power on the part of the laity is, " We know no such rights—we comprehend no such privileges."

The primitive *bishop* was limited in his jurisdiction to a single parish or church, being indifferently called bishop, presbyter, elder, or pastor : while a bishop, in the M. E. church extends his authority over all the ministers and societies within its limits. King says, in the work already quoted from, (p. 13) " that the ancient dioceses are never said to contain churches in the plural, but only *a church*, in the singular." He remarks, (p. 16) " The bishop had but *one altar* in his whole diocese, at which his *whole flock* received the sacrament from him." To confirm this, he gives numerous proofs, which the reader may see by consulting his work. The fact is, the term bishop was originally applied to the minister of any particular church as overseer of that flock.

In addition to this, each individual church elected its own pastor or bishop. Says the author alluded to, (p. 20) " When the bishop of a church was dead, all the people of that church met together in one place to choose a new bishop." He gives instances : Speaking of the church at Rome, he says, (p. 28) " Upon the death of Anterus, all the people met together in the church to choose a successor, where all the people unanimously chose Fabianus."

Lord King further says, " A parish and a particular church are synonymous terms, signifying one and the same thing ; and consequently, a Bishop, having but one parish under his jurisdiction, could extend his government no farther than one particular congregation ; because a single congregation and a parish were all one, of the same bulk and magnitude." (p. 15.)

" When a parish or bishopric was vacant, through the death of the incumbent, *all* the members of that parish, both clergy and *laity*, met together to choose his successor." (p. 39.)

" If a presbyter did all a bishop did, what was the difference between them ? A bishop preached, baptized, and confirmed,—so

did a presbyter. A bishop excommunicated, absolved and ordained—so did a presbyter. Whatever a bishop did, the same did a presbyter; the particular acts of their office were the same.” (p. 55.)

The only difference Lord King makes between the two is, that a Bishop or overseer had charge of a particular parish or church, while a presbyter had no particular charge. But is this the only difference between a Methodist Episcopal Bishop and an elder? No; the dominion of a Methodist Bishop more nearly resembles that of the Pope of Rome than that of a scriptural, primitive bishop.

“The whole body of the church were members of the spiritual court, clergy as well as laity, and laity as well as clergy; not one without the other, but both together.” (p. 102.)

“The members that composed these synods, were bishops, presbyters, deacons, and deputed laymen, in behalf of their respective churches.” (p. 121.)

From the above, it appears that the government of the M. E. Church is as contrary to the usages of the primitive church, as it is to the principles laid down in the Holy Scriptures. It is not pretended that any form of government is expressly laid down in the Scriptures; nevertheless, the Scriptures abound with *elements* or *principles* of church government. The M. E. form of government is a gross violation of those principles.

The Episcopalians pretend that the great success which has attended their system of operations is evidence of the righteousness and utility of Episcopacy. “*It works well*”—“*the Lord blesses it.*” So did that which is now the Apocalyptic *beast*, once work well. The Church of Rome was once pure—and much purer, when it was the age of the M. E. church, than the M. E. church now is. None but those blinded by ignorance, prejudice, interest, or the love of sect, can fail to see the *seeds of Popery* in the M. E. polity. Indeed, those seeds are pretty well sprouted already. The church is not yet sixty years old, and Methodist Episcopal Bishops have more power in *some respects*, than Roman Catholic Bishops! And the history of the last seven years teaches us that these bishops have still an open field. They may assume almost any prerogative, and the General Conference will sanction their *assumptions*! And why not? Of what is the General Conference composed? Perhaps one-half are presiding elders—creatures of the bishop; and perhaps one-eighth are looking for some General Conference office; and then not a few of the younger members are looking for the presiding elder’s office; and more are looking for the bishopric than ever can wear the triple crown. Is it therefore strange that a General Conference, composed of such materials, should sustain all Episcopal innovations and assumptions, and even authorize the bishops, by legal enactments, to continue their encroachments?

Never was there an ecclesiastical system so well contrived, by

the dependence of all its parts upon a great central wheel, to accumulate power, and put down every opposing thing, as that of METHODIST EPISCOPACY. Hence its dangerous tendency, both to our civil and religious institutions.

If revivals, or the success of the M. E. church, prove the government to be right, then it would prove absolute contradictions; for while it would prove aristocracy to be right in the M. E. church, it would as clearly prove republicanism to be right in the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist Protestant, and other churches, ^{up} or these all have revivals and success, as well as the M. E. ^{Pac} church. Moreover, if this is a good argument in favor of any ^N peculiar form of church government, it would be equally good in ^v favor of doctrines; hence it would prove Calvinism right, Arminianism right, Campellism right, and every other *ism*, and by proving too much, destroys itself, and proves nothing at all. But the fact is, this has not been the ground of their success; no one has ever been awakened, or converted, or joined the church, because of the government, but have been influenced in this by their doctrines, the industry of their ministry, and the piety of the church, while some, it is to be feared, have joined the church from motives less praiseworthy than the above.

SECTION VII.

PROSPECT OF REFORM.

There is no prospect that this church will give up slavery till *forced* to do so. As to her government, all efforts at modification and improvement have proved abortive; and the Episcopacy of the church never was established on so firm a basis as at present.

Attempts at reform were commenced about six years after the church was organized.

Two things have been aimed at in all efforts at reform,—one has been to curtail the Bishop's power, and the other to bring the influence of the laity into the councils of the church.

It has always been seen by a large portion of the travelling preachers, that if the presiding elders were elected by their suffrages, and associated with the Bishops by *right* in making out the appointments, it would abridge the Bishop's power over *them*, and afford them some little voice in determining their own fields of labor. To secure this point, therefore, has been an object with many of the preachers, almost from the first.

The secession that took place in 1792, with James O'Kelly at its head, was in consequence of the unlimited power of the Bishop in stationing the preachers. It was a very small abridgement of the Bishop's prerogative that Mr. O'Kelly and his friends asked, but the General Conference refused to grant it. The restriction desired was in the following words:

“After the Bishops appoint the preachers at the conference to their several circuits, if any one thinks himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit.”

After a debate for *three days* on this proposition, it was lost; probably through the great influence that Bishop Asbury held over the preachers, as it was understood that he was decidedly hostile to the measure.

At the Conference of 1800, another attempt was made to abridge the stationing power, by associating a committee of preachers with the Bishop, in making out the appointments. This also failed. The same question was introduced into the Conference of 1812, and lost by only *three* votes.

In 1816, a *resolution* was introduced into the Conference to make the presiding elders elective, and to constitute them a council to assist the Bishop in stationing the preachers. This was also lost.

The same resolution, with slight modifications, was brought forward in 1820, and *passed* by quite a majority. After its adoption, however, the Rev. Joshua Soule, who had just been elected to the Episcopal office, refused to act under the restriction, and consequently resigned his office. Bishop McKendree joined with Mr. Soule in his opposition to the measure, and through their joint influence they succeeded, at length, in bringing over a majority to their side, and obtained a suspension of the resolutions for four years. In 1824, their suspension was continued, and at the General Conference of 1828, they were rescinded.*

Thus an effort to abridge the powers of the Bishops, and continued for more than *thirty years*, was finally defeated by the *Bishops themselves!*

This effort was renewed at the last General Conference, (1840,) but met with its usual fate. The disposition on the part of the Conference to weaken any of the Episcopal functions, has grown less and less from the time that McKendree and Soule took a stand for themselves and their successors in 1820.

There never has been a period in the history of the church when the laity have been universally satisfied with its government. Several strenuous efforts have been made by the laity, at different times, to obtain their just rights—but all to no purpose. Secession has been their only remedy.

The secession from the church that took place in 1828, was preceded by an energetic struggle for reform on the part of a large number of local preachers and laymen, together with some few travelling preachers. Of course the latter class, in any such reform, will be always small, as they are the party interested in sustaining the “*ancient regime*” of priestly prerogatives.

* For the validity of the facts here stated, see Bangs’ History, Vol. II., p. 330, and onward.

The reformers at the time alluded to, commenced their discussions in favor of the rights of the laity, first in the "Wesleyan Repository," and afterwards in the "Mutual Rights." They argued strenuously against the Episcopal form of church government, and insisted on a lay representation in the General Conference. Memorials were sent up to that body both in 1824 and 1828, to secure for the laity a share in its deliberations. But it was like asking the despot to yield his sceptre in favor of his vassals. In the report which the Conference made on the subject of the memorials in 1824, they modestly reply to the petitioners, "PARDON US IF WE KNOW NO SUCH RIGHTS—IF WE COMPREHEND NO SUCH PRIVILEGES."

At the next Conference (1828) the injured people made another rally, and once more laid their grievances before this clerical judiciary. In answer to their claim, the Conference deny that the right of the laity to representation is a *natural* right, because, as they affirm, "the foundation of rights in ecclesiastical bodies rests on a different basis." They also deny that it is an "acquired right" which they are entitled to, either on the ground "of becoming Christians or of becoming Methodists." And as the right, if it exists at all, must be either natural or acquired, therefore they gravely conclude that no such right exists.

It was with such logic that they justified themselves in the exercise of arbitrary power, and resisted the claim of *inalienable right* on the part of the people.

After this defeat of liberty in 1828, little was said or done by the disappointed and exhausted people to gain their right, until the Conference of 1840, when petitions again flowed in upon this subject. But the Conference had become so confident of its authority, so callous to the claims of justice, and so void of all sense of religious freedom, that it did not give the memorials a respectful consideration, nor deem the petitioners worthy of an honorable answer. It is true the petitions were referred to a committee and were reported on. But such was the manner of their reference, (having been first laid on the table,) and such the report upon them, (consisting of a peremptory refusal of the prayer, accompanied with a reflection upon the manner in which the memorials had originated,) that the whole subject was treated with utter contempt.

This treatment has resulted in repeated secessions. Dr. Bangs tells us, in the History of which he is the author, that in 1791, (about six years after the organization of the church,) the Rev. Wm. Hammet, a very popular preacher, became dissatisfied, and withdrew with a party from the church. He passes over this secession very rapidly, leaving us to *guess* at the probable number of the seceders. About a year after this, according to the same author, Rev. J. O'Kelly, with a number of travelling and local preachers, left the church on account of their dissatisfaction with

the power lodged in the hands of the Bishops and presiding elders. "In the latter part of 1793," says the Dr., "they began to form societies, and *hundreds* of the people were induced to forsake the M. E. church, so that in some places *whole societies* were broken up." And he tells us that this disaffection was not confined to Virginia, the place of Mr. O'Kelly's residence, but extended also into North Carolina. Here, then, in about *eight* years after the organization of the M. E. church, Dr. Bangs tells us of *two* very important secessions on account of the odium of the government.

The next secession that he mentions, took place in 1813. This, he tells us, was composed of local preachers and laymen; some of the former, and a considerable number of the latter. This ~~body~~ ^{which} originated in New England, under the name of "Reformed Methodists," the Dr. tells us, "*has long ceased to exist.*" On what authority he makes this assertion, I know not; but I do know that the "Reformed Methodist church" still flourishes, and numbers in its communion, about fifty ordained, and twenty-five licensed preachers, and two or three thousand members.

The next prominent secession took place in 1827-8. The seceders organized under the name of the "Methodist Protestant Church." Some thousands soon gathered to their standard, and at the present time they number about seventy-five thousand members.

Since that time, a multitude of smaller separations from the church have taken place, besides a host of individual withdrawals, both from among the ministers and laity.

In consequence of the pro-slavery character of the M. E. Church, and also the oppressive and unscriptural character of her government, after long and prayerful deliberation, in November, 1842, Rev. Messrs. J. Horton, L. R. Sunderland and O. Scott publicly withdrew from the M. E. church, and started a new paper called the True Wesleyan. The second number of this paper contained the withdrawal of Rev. Luther Lee, and the 3d number, that of Rev. L. C. Matlack, one of the M. E. stationed preachers in the city of Boston. And from that time to the present, not a week, I believe, has passed, but has brought to the Wesleyan office the news of secessions either from the ministry or membership of the M. E. church, and generally from both.

A convention was called at the city of Utica, N. Y., in the month of May, 1843, of ministers and laymen, which formed the "Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America." This connection extends to every free state and territory in the Union. It has ten annual conferences, with from 500 to 600 preachers, and about 20,000 members!

It is but just to remark, that previously to the secession of Horton, Sunderland and Scott, a local secession had taken place in Utica, N. Y., another in Cleveland, O.; and also pretty extensive secessions in Michigan. Our brethren in Michigan had formed

themselves into an annual conference, and were in successful operation previously to the above-named secession. They numbered, at the time of the Utica Convention, over twenty preachers, and, about a thousand members. They now constitute a very important branch of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America.

The Wesleyan Connection is now in a state of great prosperity, and new recruits are weekly coming to us from the old church.

There are not less than one hundred thousand Methodists in the United States, under various names, who stand disconnected with the M. E. Church, and in hostility to her government. Such an ^{up. suant} ~~Part~~ of dissatisfaction and disruption is without a parallel in the ~~Part~~ of any other church in this country. And let it be noticed, ^{Not} ~~Not~~ that these secessions have taken place notwithstanding the strong bond of union calculated to bind the Methodist body together, growing out of unity of faith, homogeneousness of usage and religious habit, strong attachment to the early pioneers of the cause, and endearing relations, strengthened by a thousand delightful considerations.

With what expulsive power, therefore, must a system operate, that can sunder such bonds of union, and throw off thousands and tens of thousands from their connection with it! Must not such a system be *radically* and *necessarily* wrong?

SECTION VIII.

LOCAL PREACHERS.

“If a local preacher be distressed in his temporal circumstances on account of his services in the circuit, he may apply to the quarterly meeting conference, who may give him what relief they judge proper, after the allowance of the travelling preachers and their wives, and all other regular allowances are discharged.”

Who can mark the terms of this provision, and not pronounce it a monstrous outrage upon justice, and an aggravating insult to misfortune? One would have thought that the conference which adopted it would have blushed for very shame in the act. It is, however, but another proof of the heartless and merciless character of absolute power. Mark; in the case alluded to in the provision, it is admitted that the local preacher is “*distressed* in his temporal circumstances on account of *service in the circuit*.” This, of course, would give him a claim in *right*, paramount to the claims of *all others* not thus afflicted. Yet he can *claim* nothing. He *may* apply to the quarterly meeting conference, who *may* give what relief *they judge proper*, AFTER the allowance of the *travelling preachers* and of their *wives*, and ALL OTHER regular allowances are discharged!” If there is anything left, the conference “*may give what relief they judge proper*.”

Thus we see that the travelling preacher must first receive his

allowance, however comfortable his circumstances may be, while the local preacher, who "has broke down under excessive labors in the circuit," and is "distressed in his temporal circumstances," can receive nothing, unless there should be a surplus "after all other regular claims are discharged," and the conference should "judge proper" to bestow the fragments of its funds upon him. Alas ! for the poor man, even on this tenure ; for it is seldom that all the "regular allowances are discharged."

In concluding this brief notice of the local ministry, I would say, that though they are thus subordinated to the ruling hierarchy, some of the most talented, pious and liberty-loving men are found in their ranks. They have always furnished a large portion of the leading spirits who have undertaken reformatory measures in the church, though it is to be regretted that many of them are either too insensible to their own condition, or too regardless of their own rights and responsibilities, to make the necessary efforts to pluck themselves and the church from the grasp of a spiritual despotism. *Six thousand* local preachers, with such proportion of the laity as they might secure to their cause, could shake the fabric of Methodist Episcopacy to its foundations.

SECTION IX.

INFLUENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL SYSTEM ON THE REPUBLIC.

No one, I think, can have failed to see, during the course of this investigation, that republicanism and the Methodist Episcopal economy are perfect antagonists. While republicanism recognizes the right of the *people* to frame the government under which they are to live, we have seen the government of the M. E. church organized exclusively by the travelling preachers, without even consulting the laity in respect to it. While republicanism provides for the frequent election of law-makers, by the voice of the citizens, Methodist Episcopacy invests the law-making power in the travelling clergy, by a provision unalterable, *except by the travelling preachers themselves !* In a republic, the people also elect their executive and judicial officers ; but the conference preachers in the M. E. church have usurped both these departments of responsibility and power. In a republic, the public monies and public edifices are under the supervision of the sovereign people ; but the vast funds of the M. E. church, together with the houses of worship, with a few exceptions, are under the absolute control of her regular ministry. In a republic, the people choose their own public servants ; but the Methodist societies are obliged to receive such teachers as the *bishops* may see fit to send them. In a republic, a man is tried for an al-

eged offence, by a *jury* empannelled upon just principles; but in the M. E. church, the *stationed preacher* tries the accused member by a committee of *his own selecting*.

This series of particulars, showing the antagonistic character of Methodist Episcopacy to republican principles, might be greatly extended; but it is by no means necessary, since the most superficial observer cannot fail to see that it has no one feature compatible with the civil polity of our country. What, then, must be the influence of this ecclesiastical superstructure on the American Republic? Must not its legitimate tendency be dangerous and destructive? With its *eleven hundred thousand* members, its *ten thousand preachers*, its *million and a half* of supporters, its central organs of information, its *half million* of money, its centrally constructed machinery, set in motion by the great central wheel of the General Conference, and extending its influence, by means of a thousand subordinate wheels, to every society and class throughout the Union, together with its *absolute head* in the persons of the bishops, render the Methodist Episcopal organization a most dangerous institution to the liberties of the nation. It is, indeed, far more dangerous than Catholicism itself; for the corrupt and liberty-crushing character of that organization has long since been exposed, so that the ever-watchful eye of liberty is always open to its dark plottings and jesuitical designs. But Episcopal Methodism is a Protestant system, sprung up almost imperceptibly in our midst, under circumstances and auspices which have, till lately, shielded it from public reprobation, and, for the most part, even from any general suspicion. Here lies the difference.

It is easy to see that a people, trained under the influence of such a system, are poorly prepared to appreciate the benefits of civil freedom, and consequently are dangerous hands into which to commit the guardianship of our free institutions. At least *one-tenth* part of the American population are either directly or indirectly connected with the M. E. church; and when the consolidated and homogeneous character of the organization is taken into view, it must be readily discovered that the same political views must generally obtain throughout this entire body. The political power, therefore, of this numerous people, subject as they are to a *central control*, may be brought to bear, in any given case, with tremendous effect upon the destiny of the republic. A hint may be suggested by the bishops to their presiding elders, by the presiding elders to the preachers on their several districts, and by the preachers to their class-leaders in the several societies, by the leaders to the members of their classes, and thus a scheme may be extended, and simultaneously adopted, from one end of the Union to the other, in every society of the connection.

It is not intended by these remarks, to intimate, that this church was instituted for any corrupt purpose, or that the present genera-

tion of her ministers entertain any treasonable designs towards the government of our country; but the object is to show, that when, under the influence of rapidly increasing wealth and power and the despotism of its principles, it shall become *corrupt*, then it will afford a most ready and efficient agency, by which a worldly and ambitious priesthood, joined with some intriguing and liberty-hating political party, may upturn the foundations of our government, demolish the temple of freedom, and establish an absolute despotism over the land. Such is the tendency of this system; and, if the result is not realized, it will not be from any want of adaptation in the principles which the system involves, but because the spirit of liberty will be too vigilant to suffer herself to be slain by its perfidious hand.

By tracing the parallel lines of civil and ecclesiastical history up to antiquity, it will be found, that in proportion as religious freedom has obtained, in the same proportion has civil government been administered according to free principles. Do we not owe our own republic to a band of religionists, who fled to the wilds of America to secure to themselves and their posterity the God-given and inviolable rights of conscience?

Is not the church designed of God to be the *standard of justice and right*? But are not the recognition and administration of justice and right, the essentials of civil as well as religious freedom? If, then, the church exerts her appropriate power on the community in which she exists, and does not at the same time sustain the principles of freedom by securing liberty of conscience to her own members, can we expect that *civil* freedom will long continue? It is manifest that if the church exerts the power it is its province to exert, it will give character to a nation; in which case, if a despotism exists in the former it will sooner or later sway its iron sceptre over the latter. If not, why is the spread of the Romish church in this country considered so dangerous to its liberties? If it is no matter what *church* organization we have, then let Catholicism multiply itself till it swallow up all sects and banish Protestantism from the land. Why not? Is despotism any more dangerous in the Romish than in the Methodist Episcopal or any other church? Does not the M. E. church, in effect, set up infallibility, deny the right of private judgment, and cut off the exercise of individual conscience?

In alluding to the rights of self-government, do not her authorities say, "*We know no such rights?*" And yet it is this organization, involving as it does principles at deadly war with inalienable rights, that is exerting a direct control over a large proportion of the American people, and by an influence, more remote, but not less certain, is wearing away the foundations of civil freedom itself.

The M. E. church not only exerts a dangerous influence on the liberties of the nation, by the direct and legitimate tendency

of its principles, but also by the support which it gives to the system of *slavery* in our land. This church has taken the ground, either in her declaration or acts, that slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral or political evil; that is, that it is no evil at all. It has cast the broad ægis of Episcopal authority over the system as a shield of defence. It has prohibited the agitation of the slavery question, and enforced the violation of its edicts with the severest of ecclesiastical penalties. It has shaped its policy, on this question, according to the slave laws of the South, in rejection of the plainest precepts of Jesus Christ. It is hostile to its communion and ministry hundreds of slaveholders and in cruel bondage *tens of thousands* of their own brethren in Christ; and, to accommodate slavery, has disfranchised all its colored members throughout the slaveholding States the Union.

In doing all this, and much more that might be mentioned, the M. E. church is giving its support to an institution which, more than all others, is calculated to sap the foundations of our civil freedom, and hasten the republic into the grave where lie the mouldering kingdoms of antiquity.

In looking in upon the state of things in the M. E. church, it does not require a very sagacious observer to see, in their incipient beginnings, the very corruptions of the Romish church. And as sure as the Bishop of Rome was ever vested with the name and power of a Pope, and as certain as John Tetzel, in the name of Leo X. bartered indulgences to sin, so sure the E. Methodist church, unless it change its policy, or is controlled by some foreign influences, will degenerate into a Popedom, in which a cringing and degraded laity will be but the passive tools of a despotic priesthood.

The Romish church at the close of the *third century*, was not so subject to the dominance of the clergy, nor so liable to a reign of spiritual despotism, as is the *Methodist Episcopal Church* at the present moment.

The corruptions and usurpations in the primitive church sprang up *incidentally*, and were nourished by *circumstances*, but the M. E. church, as has been seen, has its *origin* in *usurpation*, and involves in its *organization* the very *elements* of **ABSOLUTE POWER**.

PRESENT POSITION
OF THE M. E. CHURCH.

[The following is an extract from an able "review" of the proceedings of the M. E. General Conference of 1844, by R. L. LEE. The whole document, which is contained in; we do not publish, No. 4, is well worthy a serious perusal. We publish here the concluding portion. O. S.]

THE REPEAL OF THE COLORED TESTIMONY RESOLUTION AND
PETITIONS.

On this we would remark that we have no fault to find with the action as far as it goes, but we complain that it does not go far enough to entitle it to the name of anti-slavery action, when it is considered in connection with its history, and the circumstances of the case. Let us examine the facts, and then we shall see the anti-slavery merit, if there is any in it.

The facts are these:—

1. Rev. Silas Comfort, at the time a member of the Missouri Conference, admitted a colored person to testify in a church trial against a white person.

2. For this conduct he was arrested at the next session of the conference, tried, and pronounced guilty of mal-administration.

3. He appealed to the next General Conference, and the Conference heard the appeal and reversed the decision of the Missouri Annual Conference.

4. Slaveholders raised a storm and threatened to divide the church, and declared that they could never go back to their people with that decision upon the Journal of the General Conference.

5. The General Conference reconsidered the case, and rejected the appeal of Silas Comfort, by which the decision of the Missouri Conference, declaring it to be mal-administration to admit the testimony of a colored person in the trial of a white person, was left untouched and unappealed from, and the right to appeal from it denied.

6. The Conference then passed the colored testimony resolution, by which they said the admission of such testimony is inexpedient and unjustifiable.

Here the matter rested for four years, until the last General

Conference repealed the resolution. We have no objection to admit the full force of the repeal, all that any honest man can claim, viz., that the church is as well off as it was before that resolution was adopted. We think no one will claim more. Will any one pretend that the church is better off for having rested for four years under the disgraceful colored testimony resolution? As well might a man claim to be better off for having committed sin, seeing he has now repented and ceased to commit the same crime. The passage of that resolution was a sin against God and man: and on the supposition that the Conference has repented of it, we are not able to see that they are any better off for having committed it. Granting then all that can be claimed, viz., that the church is just where it was before the passage of that resolution, how does she then stand on the subject of colored testimony! How can she maintain that the repeal of that resolution does not reach the case of the disfranchised colored people; it does not in the least secure to them the right of bearing testimony to the truth against a white sinner in a church trial. Several views may be taken which will lead us to this conclusion.

It cannot be pretended that the repeal of the resolution has restored to the colored man any more than its passage took away from him. Did the passage of that resolution take away the right of giving testimony in a church trial? In theory it did, but in practice it did not; and hence its repeal only restores it in theory and not in practice. The right was not practically enjoyed before the passage of that resolution, as is evident from the fact that the first act of admitting such testimony was judged and pronounced to be mal-administration; and as it was not practically enjoyed before the passage of the resolution, so its repeal does not secure the right, without further guards thrown around the colored man, which the General Conference has failed to extend to him. The colored man is now just where he was before the resolution was adopted, in a legal point of view; and as the right was denied him then, so he has no security for its enjoyment now. What the passage of the resolution took away, its repeal has restored, and it cannot be claimed that it has restored any more; but its passage did not take away the right of the colored man to testify in church trials, and therefore its repeal cannot have restored that right.

2. The repeal of the colored testimony resolution, under the circumstances, does not of itself legally secure the right to which such resolution stood opposed. The repeal of that resolution does not lay the preachers and annual conferences under any stronger obligation to grant the right in question, than they were before the resolution was passed; and as they did not grant it then, so they cannot be expected to grant it now. Nor have they any reason to believe that the General Conference intended or expected they would grant it any more than formerly. There was not an

expression by way of discussion, in the process of repealing the resolution, that implied that any different practical course was expected from what had already been pursued. Had the Conference repealed the colored testimony resolution with a sincere desire and expectation of restoring the disfranchised colored people to the right of giving testimony in church trials, how easy would it have been to have said so. They knew, and the world knows that they knew that the right in question had been withheld before the adoption of the offensive resolution, and that it would be withheld after its repeal; and yet they have left the subject without a word of disapproval. Why did they not say as much in favor of the admission of colored testimony, as they said against it in the rescinded resolution? The reason is, the whole proceeding was heartless: it was a part of the two-faced policy which characterized the whole proceedings of the conference: it was to do right in form in the eyes of the North, to prevent secession, without bringing righteous principles to bear in fact upon the corruptions of the South.

3. The legal bearing of the decision of the General Conference in the case of Silas Comfort's appeal, fully and forever settles this question. It has been shown above, that all that can be claimed is, that the repeal of the resolution leaves the question just where it was before it was adopted. What then was the legal aspect of the subject at the time that resolution was brought forward? The important facts have been stated above. Rev. Silas Comfort admitted the testimony of a colored person, for which he was called to an account by the Missouri Annual Conference, and was tried, and convicted of mal-administration. He appealed to the General Conference, and they finally decided not to hear the appeal. This left the decision of the Missouri Conference in full force, and at the same time took away all right and power to appeal from it, so that it must stand. This was the state of the case when the resolution was adopted, and hence this must be the state of the case now that it is repealed.

The legal state of the question is this: if a preacher admits colored testimony, he may be called to an account for so doing, be convicted of mal-administration, and the General Conference will not hear his appeal, or interfere with such decision of the annual conference. The rejection of colored testimony, therefore, has the sanction of the General Conference, which was given to it when the conference refused to hear an appeal from the decision of an annual conference, which declared it wrong to admit such testimony. Every slaveholding conference can with perfect safety, yea, under the full protection of the General Conference, granted in the rejection of the Comfort appeal, convict every minister of mal-administration, who shall dare to admit the testimony of a colored person. The Missouri Annual Conference decided that to admit the testimony of a colored person in a church trial is mal-administration, and the question being brought before the General

Conference, they refused to hear it, which left the Missouri Conference undisturbed in its decision, and of course that and every other conference are at full liberty to repeat the decision as often as occasion may require. From this it is clear that the annual conferences are at full liberty to reject the testimony of colored persons in church trials, if they choose so to do, and the only influence the repeal of the colored testimony resolution has on this right of the annual conferences, is to extend it through the whole church, whereas that resolution limited it to those parts where the law of the State excluded such testimony from civil courts. The colored testimony resolution declared that it is inexpedient and unjustifiable to admit the testimony of colored persons in church trials where the civil law excludes such testimony from courts of justice. This says, by implication at least, that their testimony shall be admitted in church trials where the civil law admits it, but the decision of the conference in the Comfort case, upon which the question fell back when this was repealed, does not even go as far as the civil law. The question now rests upon that decision, which is that an annual conference may convict a preacher of maladministration for admitting a colored person to testify in a church trial, and when a conference does so, no appeal shall be allowed to the General Conference. This authorizes those conferences to exclude colored testimony where the civil law does not exclude it, for the power of the annual conference in the case depends upon the fact that there is no appeal from its decision, and if there is no appeal from the Missouri Conference, there is none from the decision of the New York or New England Conferences. Thus it is seen that the repeal of the colored testimony resolution, instead of restoring disfranchised colored people to their rights, has actually put it within the power of the annual conferences more extensively to rob them. But we would not be misunderstood on this point; our own opinion is that the slave or free colored people have not been practically injured by the passage of the colored testimony resolution, nor do we believe they will be benefitted or injured by its repeal. Men must have learned but little of the spirit of slavery, if they suppose it will be restrained by such resolutions. Right is obviously more sacred than law or mere resolves, and as slavery is the clearest violation of right, of the most sacred of all the rights of man, it cannot be expected that it will regard church discipline and conference resolves when they come in its way. Such being the case, we do not believe one colored witness more has been rejected under the colored testimony resolution, and we do not believe one more will be admitted in consequence of its repeal. The truth is, in slave States colored persons have never been heard as witnesses against white persons in church trials, and they will be excluded still, now that infamous resolution is repealed.

But if the above views are correct, it may be asked why we have

made so much noise about the colored testimony resolution. We answer, *we* have never complained of the resolution, on the ground that its existence practically injured the slave; no man can put his finger upon a sentence we have ever written upon this ground. We complain of it because it was a wicked bowing down to slavery; because it was a violation of the law of Christ, and because it exhibited deep corruption on the part of the Conference. On these points its repeal has not fully relieved us, for we have no evidence that one individual concerned has changed his mind on the moral right of that resolution. There has doubtless been a greater change in the votes, than there has been in the principles and moral feelings of the voters. Men of the North, who voted for that resolution, never did believe it morally right in principle; we do not believe a man can be found who dare say he does now, or ever did, approve of the principle of that resolution. They voted for it out of expediency, to prevent a division of the Church, lest the South should secede, and they voted to repeal it out of expediency, to prevent a division of the Church, lest there should be secessions in the North. We should be glad to find the first man who has changed his mind concerning the moral right of that resolution. Is there a Methodist preacher in the non-slaveholding States, who was so ignorant in 1840 as not to know that such a resolution was a violation of the law of God?

We will add but one remark on this subject, upon which so much has been said and written. Whatever may be claimed as an anti-slavery victory, on the ground of the repeal of the colored testimony resolution, must have been won as a pro-slavery victory on the other side in 1848. If the repeal is an anti-slavery triumph in 1844, its adoption must have been a pro-slavery triumph in 1840. If, by repealing this resolution, the Conference did something against slavery in 1844, then by adopting it the Conference did something for the support of slavery in 1840. If those men who voted for the repeal of the rule in 1844, have thereby shown themselves to be anti-slavery, then those men who voted for its adoption in 1840 proved themselves to be pro-slavery. Among these is Dr. Peck, at the head of the department in New York. Was he pro-slavery in 1840, with others that might be named? If he was, then it cannot be denied that the church generally was pro-slavery at that time, and if he was not pro-slavery when he voted for the colored testimony resolution, then the Conference did not perform an anti-slavery work when they repealed the same resolution in 1844. With these remarks we will leave our old friends to glory over the anti-slavery triumph in the repeal of the colored testimony resolution, if it is pleasing to them to glory in their own shame,—for just as they magnify the glory of 1844, they deepen the shame of 1840.

Anti-Slavery Petitions.

We come now to the concluding point in our review, so far as action against slavery is concerned, namely, the anti-slavery petitions which were sent to the Conference, praying for action against slavery. These petitions were from two sources, Annual Conferences and the membership of the church. Nine Annual Conferences and ten thousand members petitioned the General Conference to take action against slavery. It will not be denied that these petitions expressed the sentiments of the anti-slavery portion of the Church; from them, therefore, may we learn what was promised and what was expected to be done in the Conference against slavery, so far as anything was promised and expected. So far as the Conference granted what was prayed for, so far they did something in the sense of the promises and anticipations concerned; so far as they did not grant the prayers of the petitioners, so far they did nothing, for doubtless they petitioned for what they wanted, for what they expected, and for what had been promised to keep them from seceding. Three things were prayed for.

1. The repeal of the colored testimony resolution. What this has secured for anti-slavery we have seen above, and need not review it in this place. The petition was granted, but not so as to secure the object had in view by the petitioners. If they were honest in presenting these petitions, which we will not call in question, the design was to secure to colored people the right of bearing testimony to the truth against white offenders in church trials; and it has been shown above that the Conference has utterly failed to do it. Hence, while they have, *in form*, responded to the petitions, they have, *in fact*, not touched the real object of the petitioners. To have met those petitions, under the circumstances, the colored testimony resolution should have been repealed by a counter declaration, which should not only have nullified the resolution of 1840, but which should have also nullified the declaration of the Missouri Conference, and made it the duty of preachers to admit such testimony, and of the Conferences to protect them in so doing, instead of leaving all the Annual Conferences at liberty to pronounce them guilty of mal-administration, whenever they dare to take the padlock off the lips of a colored man in trials of the professed Church of Jesus Christ. We repeat, that if the petitioners were honest and intelligent, they could not have contemplated less than this, and yet the Conference made no approach to this needful reform.

2. The petitioners prayed the Conference not to elect a slaveholding bishop. The Conference, it is true, did not elect a slaveholder to the Episcopate; they had no occasion to, having one without to their heart's content. But did the Conference do any

better than to elect a slaveholding bishop? We think not. They may have done better in the eyes of expediency, but we are sure they did not in moral principle.

(1.) They found they had a slaving bishop already on hand when they came together, and yet no man complained that there was any violation of moral principle in the bishop's slaveholding; they declared him to be a pure man, a good minister, and more to be loved than any other bishop on the bench.

(2.) They suffered him to remain a bishop and a slaveholder, which was in moral principle the same as to have elected a slaveholder to the Episcopate. When the petitioners prayed against the election of a slaveholder to the Episcopate, their prayer was not founded upon objections to the act of electing a slaveholder, but to having a slaveholding bishop. Now, though there was none *elected*, yet they *have* one, the Conference therefore suffered the very thing to exist against which those petitions were directed. For the General Conference to suffer one of their bishops to become a slaveholder and still remain a bishop, claiming as they did the power to expel, depose or suspend, and yet doing neither, was no better in moral principle than to have elected one. In this thing therefore the petitions were disregarded, and nothing prayed for can be said to have been done.

3. The petitioners prayed the Conference to take measures entirely to separate slavery from the church. It will not be pretended that any action was had on this class of petitions, more than to report against them, against granting the thing prayed for, and adopting such report without discussion. We here have not only the fact that the Conference did nothing, but we have their positive declaration against doing anything. The committee reported on these petitions against taking measures to separate slavery wholly from the church, and the Conference adopted the report. The church is then opposed to taking measures to separate slavery from its communion. Can any action satisfy, which does not contemplate the entire separation of slavery from the church? Let those concerned answer this. The following is a resolution adopted by a Methodist Anti-Slavery Convention held in Boston, Mass., Jan 18, 1843.

“Resolved, That slavery being a sin, and this sin in the M. E. church, and the church a unit, nothing short of a **SPEEDY** and **ENTIRE** separation of slavery from the church can satisfy the consciences of *honest and faithful abolitionists*.”

After waiting more than a year, these brethren who adopted that resolution, petitioned the General Conference to separate slavery entirely from the church, and the Conference declares that it is inexpedient to take any such action. Are they satisfied, are their consciences at ease, or have they ceased to be “honest and faithful abolitionists,” for “speedy and entire separation of slavery from the church” is out of the question, so far as the action of

the General Conference is concerned. Where are the mighty men that voted for this resolution? Crandall, Porter, Adams, Hatch, and a host of others? Up, arouse those sleeping consciences, which cannot be satisfied but by a SPEEDY and ENTIRE separation of slavery from the church. If slavery is separated from the church very soon, it will be by the action of slaveholders, against the avowed principles and wishes of those with whom you will be left in loving communion! We trust it has now been shown that nothing was done in the last General Conference worthy to be called anti-slavery action, nothing which ought to "satisfy honest abolitionists." What remains is to notice the plan of division, but this we shall leave for a concluding section.

DIVISION OF THE CHURCH.

1. It is worthy of remark that, if the division takes place, of which we have but little doubt, it will be a Southern measure. The North have not sought it, they have not desired it, they have labored to prevent it, and have declared over and over again, that it would be an unwise and disastrous measure. The division does not take place because the North are not willing to live in communion and fellowship with slaveholders, as heretofore, but because the South will not longer remain in connection with non-slaveholders, among whom there is a very small sprinkling of "modern abolition." The North had promised them, from time to time, that abolitionism should be put out of the church, and they did all they could to get it out. This was openly avowed in the General Conference; it was declared that they had "fought with the dreadful spirit of abolition," and Dr. Bangs was more than once referred to as having suffered every thing but martyrdom in opposing abolition. But alas! the effort failed, and the South became satisfied that abolition would never be put out of the church; their last hope had now failed, for they had hoped that secession was likely to do what opposition could not; that when "Scott, Sunderland & Co." seceded, abolition would be drained off, but it was now obvious that secession, instead of getting abolition out of the church, was manufacturing *nominal* abolition in the church, ten times as fast as the seceders could have done by remaining, and the South do not distinguish between the name and the vitality of the thing. They saw, moreover, that the Northern members, with all their protestations against abolition, were compelled to succumb to its influence in many particulars, as the only successful method of opposing the seceders. This destroyed all hope of remaining in peaceful connection with the North, as the North declared themselves compelled to take positions hostile and injurious to the South, against their feelings, from pure necessity, to prevent the Northern portion of the church from "going over to the seceders in troops." These circumstances led the South to strike for a division.

But it may be asked what led the South to be so early in the work of division, if nothing was really done against slavery, as we have maintained in this review, and as has been absolutely asserted by Dr. Bond in the great official? The answer is plain, though slavery was not *injured*, it was *offended*; though no *encroachment* was made upon it, as it has heretofore existed in the church, positions were taken which put an end to its long cherished hope of being able some day to walk in at the Episcopal door, and receive a mitre prepared on purpose for the head of slavery. No one, witnessing the proceedings of the Conference, could doubt that slavery could no longer hope to be elected to the Episcopacy in the regular way, and the fact that they had a slaveholding Bishop in the person of James O. Andrew, was of no avail in their minds, since this fact had led to the painful discovery, that no slaveholder could be elected to the Episcopacy. Slavery was not *injured* in any of its positions heretofore held in the church, but it was *insulted*, and this was more than it could bear. To speak in the use of legal terms, there was an *assault* but no *battery*; hard words were used, but hands were not laid upon slavery. It is perfectly plain that the North did not desire division, and that they did nothing to offend the South, beyond what they felt themselves absolutely compelled to do to resist the influence of secession in the North; and if division is the result, the South will be its author, it will be emphatically their measure.

2. The North are responsible for the terms and principles of the division; the North are as clearly the author of these, as the South are of the division itself. The South could say to their constituents, should they complain of the terms, we did the best we could, the North had the majority, and that majority opposed to a division, and we were compelled to accept of such terms as they would give us, or none at all; but the North cannot plead any such excuse, for they had the power in their own hands, and could dictate just such terms of division as they saw fit. If there is then any thing wrong, any thing pro-slavery in the terms proposed, the fault is justly chargeable upon the North.

We will now examine the principles of the plan of division adopted by the General Conference. There are many objections which we might urge against the principles of the division proposed, but we will confine our remarks to a few prominent ones.

1. *It is essentially pro-slavery.* It fully recognizes the slaveholding christianity of the South. This is done in several ways. It is done on the plan of division, which is to give all the border conferences and churches the right of deciding to which party they will be attached, the Northern portion binding itself, when a majority has decided to go with the South, not to take the pastoral charge of the minority, or erect any churches within their limits. This fully recognises them as a christian church in full christian fellowship, within whose limits they have no right to act, within whose limits they cannot rear churches, but upon the principle of

schism. This certainly fully endorses their christian character, and to endorse the character of a slaveholding church, is to endorse slavery as practised by that church.

The second resolution, providing for the preachers in case of a division, fully endorses the christian character of the Southern division. It reads as follows :

“Resolved, That ministers, local and travelling, of every grade and office in the M. E. church, may, as they prefer, remain in that church, or without blame attach themselves to the church South.”

Here is full liberty given to ministers of every class to join the slaveholding church. It is true, they have no power to prevent them from so doing ; it is well that they have no such power, but they have the right of moral suasion, and it is their duty to use it, if slaveholding is wrong. But they have pronounced that to join a slaveholding church is right, for they have said that they may do it “**WITHOUT BLAME.**” If then they may do it “without blame,” it is not morally wrong to join a pro-slavery, a slaveholding church. There was just so much anti-slavery as that in the last General Conference, and no more. But would they say as much as that for anti-slavery secessionists in the North ? By no means, it is a great sin to leave the M. E. church and join the **ANTI-SLAVERY SECEDERS**, but men may **WITHOUT BLAME LEAVE THE M. E. CHURCH AND JOIN THE SLAVEHOLDING SECEDERS !** So much worse is it in the eyes of Episcopal Methodism, to secede from an abhorrence of slavery, than from a love of slavery ; for they can call the division nothing but a secession on the part of the South, and the world knows that it is for the sake of slavery. Highly elevated, morally sublime and glorious must have been the anti-slavery of the last General Conference, when it actually consented to the rightfulness of secession for the sake of slavery, for the purpose of preventing secession on anti-slavery ground !!! It is clear that they were so much opposed to slavery that there was but one thing to which they were more opposed, and that was anti-slavery.

2. *We object to the plan of division because it violates the terms of their commission as ministers of Jesus Christ.* The Northern division, claiming to be the M. E. church, have bound themselves never to extend their labors and their organization south of the dividing line that shall be agreed upon by a majority vote of those who are to constitute the border societies. What right had they to enter into such a contract ? If they are ministers of Jesus Christ, they must acknowledge the obligation of that command which says, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” and yet in direct controvention of this command, they have agreed, yea, bound themselves by a solemn treaty, that they will never extend their labors into one half of this great republic, will never preach the truth there, will never erect churches there, will never send missionaries there, to enlighten the ignorant and to seek after the souls of the lost and perishing.

Will it be said that this contract was entered into with the understanding that the Southern portion of the church would look after these interests? To this we reply,

(1.) That the best that can be made of it is, that they have handed over one half of the nation, for the safe keeping of their souls, into the hands of a slaveholding christianity.

(2.) They have no security that christianity will be maintained in any of its vital forms. A purer church than that which exists in the South has fallen and become utterly dark and corrupt, and should the South depart from the doctrines of the church, and the forms of religion, the North are still pledged not to go there to erect other churches, and replant the living tree of christianity. If any have doubts on this point, the following extract from the contract will settle it.

“All the Societies, Stations and Conferences adhering to the church in the South, by a vote of a majority of the members of said Societies, Stations and Conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the Southern church; and the ministers of the M. E. church shall in no wise attempt to organize churches or Societies within the limits of the church South.”

3. *The plan of division, in our view, is highly oppressive on the minority of those societies on the line, who may choose to go with the Southern party.* Suppose a society of two hundred members should vote to attach themselves to the South, by a vote of one hundred and one, the ninety-nine are compelled to go with slavery or be separated from all the forms of Methodism, unless they commit the horrible sin of joining the “Scottites,” or join some other denomination. If the minority, in the above case, should secede from the body and refuse to go with slavery, the ministers of the M. E. church cannot take charge of them; they can obtain no Methodist Episcopal preaching, but in violation of this solemn treaty; and hence they must be compelled to adhere to slavery, join the Wesleyans, [“Scottites,”] or abandon Methodism. We should be glad to know whence the Conference, composed wholly of ministers, acquired the right of signing away the laity by majority votes after this manner.

CONCLUSION.

1. We have before us, in the proceedings of the last General Conference, a clear illustration of the absurdity and utter futility of *expediency*, when it is allowed to take the helm in the place of principle, and control the counsels of the church on great moral questions. That the Conference was governed by expediency will not, cannot be denied; it was confessed in debate too many times to be forgotten. But what was the object of this expediency? It was to avoid touching the great question of slavery; and so far as they were compelled to touch it, to do it in such a way as not

to produce excitement and division. Could they have managed so as to have done enough against slavery to satisfy the abolitionists, without doing so much as to alarm or offend slaveholders, the end of their deepest solicitude would have been gained. The effort was not to know what is right, what does the cause of the bleeding slave demand, what will please or offend God, but what will prevent secession, and keep the church together, holding abolitionists and slaveholders in sweet communion. Such a course might succeed, if God had no counsel to fulfil, and no principles to vindicate : but as it is, "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." Nothing is more common, when men of worldly expediency have got their plans all laid, and are, in their own imaginations, just on the point of realizing the end of their expediency efforts, than for God to empty the contents of his horn of confusion into their counsels, and the elements wake from their sleepy calm, the conflicting principles which have been tampered into the embrace of each other, and bound together by the treacherous and frail cords of expediency, commence their war upon each other, and the whole concern is at once exploded by the action of its own discordant elements. Such was the case with the last General Conference. If the leading journals of the church told the truth, they expected one of the most peaceful sessions, for they proclaimed this on the eve of assembling of the Conference. They doubtless applied their expediency principles, and had calculated in what forms they should have to meet the question of slavery, and settled it in anticipation. The most formidable shape in which they could foresee it was, in the petitions : and yet these were disposed of without a struggle. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that if no unforeseen troubles had come upon them, they would have had a peaceful session as predicted : but there were two shapes in which slavery made its appearance in the midst of their counsels, as unexpected, and yet as horrifying, as would have been two unblessed ghosts sent to them from the nether world. Still they applied their expediency principles, and refused to meet the great principles of the moral right of slavery, or rather its moral wrong ; they fought not for principle, but for positions to which they laid no claim but that of expediency ; they divided : and when posterity shall inquire the cause, the faithful historian will give the answer by saying they were one in principle, but split on matters of expediency ; yielding principle for the sake of union, they resorted to expediency to promote it, and by it they were divided.

2. The expediency course of the General Conference resulted, as might be expected by all who believe in a distinction between right and wrong, in a God and in a controlling Providence : that is, it resulted in a sacrifice of moral character, without securing the end for which the sacrifice was made. The Northern portion of the church occupies an unenviable position ; they have yielded all to slavery in *principle*, for the sake of *union*, and have lost the advantages of the union after all. How much better would it have

been for the majority to have stood up for right, and met the consequences ; they would then have been no more than divided, and division would have been no worse than it now is, while they would then have possessed the advantage of an elevated moral position. It was most certainly a fearful measure to hazard the division of the church on an expediency measure ; but had principle been assumed instead of expediency, the position would have justified itself in view of any consequences, for nothing can be plead in opposition to right. When a church can be divided by an adherence to truth and sound principles, to divide it can be no crime : but to divide a church by a measure which is urged only from motives of expediency, to say the least, is a doubtful business. Had the Conference declared their belief in the sinfulness of slavery, and taken ground in favor of its immediate abolition, making its abandonment a condition of membership, the same as any other sin, they could have lost no more on the score of division than they now have, while they would have saved their principles, their character, and their consistency, which last they sacrificed by offering up the union of the church on the altar of expediency. Their course exhibits what error always exhibits, great inconsistency ; and strange it is, that those involved in it are so slow to see the awkwardness of their position. Can anything present a greater extreme of inconsistency than the position of the last General Conference ? They did for expediency what they would not do for principle ; they paid a greater price for expediency than they were willing to pay for principle ; they yielded principle on the question of slavery, through a fear of dividing the church, and then clung to what they confessed to be nothing but expediency, with a tenacity which cleft it in twain !

3. When they were discussing their great principles of expediency, upon which they hung the union of the church, they dwelt largely upon the consequences of division. It was then fearfully disastrous, yea, ruinous, absolutely ruinous ! Some venerable men prayed not to live to see their great and glorious church divided. But the work is in progress, the fatal blow is struck ; come it must, and come it will ; it hasteneth ! Are they willing to die ? Or do they wish to live a little longer, that they may see how it will work after it is divided, before they depart ? It was declared that with a division of the church the glory of Methodism would depart : that division would not stop with a simple line between the North and South : that division would follow division, until wicked men should rejoice, and devils grin over their ruin. Are we now to look for all this ? Or were these mere rhetorical flourishes, pious frauds, designed to awaken the fears of the timorous, and prevent the evils they foretold ? We will not decide upon the correctness of these predictions, but leave the matter to be explained by the events of the future, hoping and praying that whatever the result may be, God may be glorified, the overthrow of slavery be hastened, righteousness and peace be promoted among men, and the Redeemer's kingdom be established in the earth : Amen.

CONCLUDING PORTION OF AN ABLE

R E V I E W,

*Of the Present Position of the M. E. Church with Regard
to Slavery.*

BY REV. EDWARD SMITH.

After the question of Radicalism was settled, in 1832, the question of slavery began again to agitate the church violently in the North, and action was attempted to be taken against it by annual and quarterly conferences; but the bishops came forward in its behalf, and refused to put motions in the annual conferences condemnatory of it, and the presiding elders did the same in the quarterly conferences, with a few exceptions. So that no (or next to no) official action could be obtained against it, even by way of testimony and remonstrance. This led to the formation of Methodist Episcopal Anti-Slavery Societies, to bring the subject before the membership, that they might have correct information on it. But these societies were not able to withstand the tide of opposition, and were, after a short and feeble existence, disbanded. Anti-slavery travelling preachers, who were active in the cause, were tried, some degraded, others gagged, and a number frightened back to their former positions. The excitement in the church was crushed, and the subject to all appearance put to rest, for more than a year, when a few anti-slavery preachers, having lost all hope of a reformation in the church, withdrew from it in the year 1842. They were soon followed by others, and steps were taken to organize a Methodist church free from any connection with slavery, which organization was completed in June, 1842. This little movement kindled a mighty anti-slavery flame, where the subject had been to appearance dead for nearly two years; three very large conventions were held in a short time after the first withdrawals, and high ground taken against the sin of slavery. Assurances were given by these conventions that the general conference of 1844 would do some great thing against slavery, and the anti-slavery members were exhorted not to leave the church, but to wait and see what the general conference would do. And many of them did wait to see the result.

Previous to this time, some southern papers intimated that the South would insist on having a slaveholder elected bishop. The new-born anti-slavery zeal which the secession of "Scott & Co." had brought into the world, declaimed against this, urging the members to petition the General Conference against it, and also

for some decided action "to free the church from all connection with slavery," declaring that if the church was not so freed, "it could not be a home for anti-slavery Methodists."

It was considered an easy matter to redeem the pledge, not to elect a slaveholder bishop. As the conference had a right to vote for a non-slaveholder, the North, having a majority of votes, could cast their vote for a candidate of this kind, thus redeem the pledge given to the members, and on their return claim that they had preserved the high and holy office from the "foul blot of slavery." This much gained, would form a reason to hope that the rest might be, by the next conference, and the people be thus induced to remain in the church. But when they came to the conference, they found the 'foul blot' already on the high and holy office, one of the bishops being a slaveholder; and how to get it off, meet the expectations they had raised, and keep the people in the church, was the difficulty.

The first plan proposed was to ask bishop Andrew to resign his office; but this was abandoned, and the conference did no more than express their *sense* of what it was proper for him to do, viz., "that he would desist from the exercise of his office so long as he might remain connected with slavery." Journals of 1844, page 84. This decision was come to after about twelve days' discussion. No one offered to table charges against bishop A. for a violation of his discipline, or pretended that any rule of the church had been violated by him; and when the conference adopted the resolution expressive of their sense of what would be proper for bishop A. to do, they seemed not to know what they had done. The thing was "of doubtful disputation." And this has been the case with that church's action on slavery from the beginning. There has been so much doing and undoing, that it is extremely difficult to balance the account; or know what is done, or rather is not undone—what remains done. The South believed that the conference had virtually suspended the bishop without the form of a trial, and protested against the act as extra-judicial. The North appointed a committee to answer the protest, which answer was placed on the journals of the conference as the answer of the majority, by a vote of 116 to 26. This document took the ground that bishop A. was not suspended, nor even tried; that "he is still a bishop, and that should he act, his acts would be valid." Journals, p. 203. The other bishops did not appear to know what the conference had done with their colleague, and addressed a note to the conference, to know what should be done with bishop A.'s name; what about his salary; what work should he do, or should he do any; and if any, how should he be appointed to it? This was previous to the vote on the answer to the protest. The conference, by a vote of 155 to 17, directed his name to stand on the minutes, in answer to the question, "Who are the bishops of the M. E. church?" with the names of the other bishops, and also in the hymn-book

and discipline, as it had done previously ; and by a vote of 152 to 14, directed that his salary should be paid, as the salary of the other bishops were paid. In these two respects he differed nothing from his colleagues, and by a vote of 103 to 67, he was left to determine, by his "own decision and action," what work he would do, in view of the expressed sense of the conference. From all which we see that bishop A. was not tried, not deposed or suspended, even virtually, nor even advised not to exercise his episcopal functions. He was left at liberty to decide whether he would or would not exercise them, and to what extent. The conference expressed their sense—did not give their advice. They gave the reason for their sense. The abolitionists of the North were ready to leave the church on account of her connection with slavery ; and if a slaveholding bishop should visit the northern conferences, hundreds, yea, "thousands, would leave the church ;" and they thought bishop A. ought to prevent this by not acting. Though it was perfectly lawful for him to act, it was not expedient in these circumstances. Yet they would not determine the point—they left this for him. Jour. p. 118.

The action of the conference in the case of bishop Andrew was the cause of the division of the church by the Louisville Convention. There was some complaint of the action in the case of Mr. Harding, of the Baltimore conference, but the southern delegates did not protest against it, or make it a ground of separation. See Protest, Jour. page 186.

Now I inquire what were the matters at issue between the North and the South, which led to the separation of the largest religious society in the country ? The North did not pretend to say that slaveholding was sinful, or in any way immoral, in bishop A.'s case. This was not said by a single member of the conference, in a debate of twelve days. They did not say that slavery was a *malum per se*—an evil in itself. This was not said by the body, nor by a single member of it. No new action was taken against slavery—no new ground proposed to be taken. Ministers were left to act as they had acted from 1800, and members as they had acted from 1808, in the matter of buying and selling slaves, and from 1785 in the matter of holding them. In answer to about ten thousand petitioners, praying the conference to take some action to "free the church entirely from any connection with slavery," the conference replied that "it was inexpedient to take any action on that point." The South asked no change in the discipline to favor slavery, not even in the person of a single individual. The South were perfectly satisfied with the discipline "as it is." The North gave not the least intimation of a wish to have it changed. What then was the difficulty ? Plainly this. The South claimed for her slaveholding ministers, in the person of bishop Andrew, the rights secured to them in the discipline. The North denied

them the enjoyment of those rights, purely on the ground of expediency. They claimed that if a slaveholding bishop should come to hold their northern conferences, their abolition members would leave the church by thousands. This would be a sore calamity. Expediency required its prevention; and if a slaveholder was bishop, he would have to travel at large, would have to come to the North, and thus drive the abolitionists out of the church. Hence bishop A. ought not to exercise the functions of his office, while their exercise would produce this effect—while the impediment remained. Both agreed that he had a right to be bishop—that he could rightfully exercise the episcopal functions; but one contended that it was inexpedient to do so, the other that it was expedient to do right, and that the North was bound to allow their Southern brethren not only the right to be slaveholders, but that slavery should not be considered as disqualifying them in any sense for the episcopal office. This was the true issue. It involves nothing but a matter of mere expediency; not a particle of principle is involved in the whole affair.

After seeing what led to the separation, we see at once how far they are a part.—The North takes the discipline “as it is,” proposing no change on the subject of slavery. The South adopted it in the very same way at the Louisville Convention.—Neither intimated a wish for any thing not in the discipline, nor expressed dissatisfaction with any thing therein contained. The North will not agree that a slaveholder shall enjoy his disciplinary right in the office of a bishop, but he may in every other office or station in the church. The South claim for the slaveholder the exercise of his disciplinary rights in every station. The North do not make the refusal of right a matter of principle, but of expediency. All the North asks is not to have a slaveholder in the episcopacy; not because the discipline forbids it, but because it is inexpedient. This is what the North asks; this is what the South refuses. On this single point they are apart—on every thing else together. This is the true state of the case, and we may truly exclaim, “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.”

The General Conference of 1844 decided that slaveholders had a disciplinary right to the office of bishop, in passing the following resolution:

“Resolved, By the delegates of the several annual conferences, in General Conference assembled, that under the provisional exception of the general rule of the church, on the subject of slavery, the simple holding of slaves, or mere ownership of slave property in States or Territories where the laws do not admit of emancipation, and the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom, constitutes no legal barrier to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office now in the ministry of the M. E. church; and cannot, therefore, be considered as operating any forfeiture of right in view of such election and ordination.” [See Journals of 1840, p. 171.]

This resolution gives the sense of the general conference of 1840, which resolution was not asked to be rescinded at the conference of 1844; by which it appears that, the general conference being judge, slaveholders may be rightfully elected and ordained to any grade of office in the M. E. church, in those States which forbid emancipation, or deny the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom.

I come next to consider the connection of the northern portion of the church with slavery. After the southern protest was presented, containing a declaration that the South could not submit longer to the violation of their rights, a committee of nine was appointed to report a plan of separation.—This committee reported twelve resolutions, which were adopted. The first bears on the point in hand, and reads as follows:—"That should the annual conferences in the slaveholding states, find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, the following rule shall be observed with regard to the northern boundary of such connection—All the societies, stations and conferences adhering to the church in the South, by a vote of the majority of the members of said societies, stations, and conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the southern church; and the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church shall in no wise attempt to organize churches or societies within the limits of the church south; nor shall they attempt to exercise any pastoral oversight therein. It being understood that the ministry of the south reciprocally observe the the same rule in relation to stations, societies, and conferences, adhering, by a vote of a majority, to the Methodist Episcopal Church; provided also, that this rule shall apply only to societies, stations, and conferences bordering on the line of division, and not to interior charges, which shall in all cases be left to the care of that church within whose territory they are situated."—[Journals of 1844, p. 135.]

The first thing worthy of notice in this resolution, is the fact that the conferences in the slaveholding states were made the judges of the necessity for division; and from their decision there is no appeal. They were authorized by a vote of 147, to 22, to decide this question, and to organize a separate connection. They have decided in favor of division, and have organized a separate connection. The delegates appointed the time for the organizing convention, should the annual conference find it necessary to hold such a convention. This was not determining the question, but submitting it to the annual conferences for their decision; and every conference in the slave states determined in favor of the convention and sent delegates to it. These delegates decided, with but three dissenting voices, to form a separate connection. The South has done what the General Conference authorized them to do, and in the very way prescribed. The South has not acted

schismatically, but by the authority and direction of the General Conference.

Second—The societies, sections and conferences bordering on the line of division, have the right to determine, by a vote, whether they will belong to the North or the South. The conferences authorized to form the southern church, were the conferences in the slaveholding states, and none else. There are four conferences, part in slave states and part in free states, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Ohio. These four include the states of Delaware, Maryland, and two-thirds of Virginia, and are not included in the southern church—had no representation in the convention—they all belong to the northern church; but they are border conferences, on the northern side of the line, and have a right to determine to which division they will belong. This determination is already virtually made by all except the Pittsburgh conference, which has held a session since the convention, and remains in fact with the North. All these will remain in the North; no one doubts this. The Virginia, Holston, Kentucky, and Missouri conferences border on the south side of the line, and have a right to come to the north, and thus extend the southern line of the northern church, so as to embrace five slave states and part of a sixth; this can be done. The societies and stations on either side of the line can choose which division they will belong to; and after all these choices are made, the northern church will include two whole slave states, and two-thirds of a third; and it may include much more. The slave territory which will be certainly included in the northern church, contains at least, according to the minutes of 1843–1844, twenty-seven thousand slave members of the church; one-sixth of all the slaves in the whole church, and about the same proportion of slaveholders. There are about twenty-five thousand slaveholders in the whole church; and if there are as many slaveholders, in proportion to the slave population in the slave territory, included in the northern church as in the southern, there are four thousand in the northern church; but if but half as many, then the northern church contains two thousand; and these are unquestionably half as many; so that the north is, and will continue to be, just as much connected with slavery as she was before the separation.

The only difference is, there are not so many slaveholders in the northern or M. E. church, but the fellowship of slaveholders is as actual and as sinful. If ever the connection of the M. E. church was sinful, it is so yet. The north did not ask for the division; did not want it—hoped to the last it would not take place. [See Journals of 1844, page 210.] The northern papers have deprecated it—insisted that there was no cause for it. The north asked not to be freed from the church connection with slavery—from the fellowship of slaveholders—hoped to the last they might not be thus freed—did all they could to continue slaveholders in their

brotherly embrace, except to agree that a slaveholding bishop should come to the north and drive the abolitionists out of the church. But the south could not agree to be hugged in the same bosom with abolitionists, and to free themselves from connection with those who believed slavery sinful, and must therefore continue to agitate the subject, or become wicked, by making peace with sin, asked and obtained a separate church. And as this object was to be freed from the agitation of abolition, they had the line run to secure that object, throwing a large break-water of slave territory in the northern church, to keep the floods of abolition from coming down on them.

Both churches are connected with slavery in the very same way, by the provision of the very same discipline. Slaveholding members and local preachers have the same security in both; but travelling preachers and bishops may not be allowed, on the ground of expediency, to be connected with it to the same extent in the northern church, they may in the southern one: this is all the difference. Both are slaveholding churches. The northern church contains both slaveholders and abolitionists, the southern are free from abolitionists. This is the true state of the case.

Third.—This resolution provides that when the line shall finally be determined, the preachers of the northern church shall “in no wise attempt to organize churches” or “exercise any pastoral oversight” within the bounds of the southern church. This provision gives the slaves up forever to the ministry of the slaveholders, and a slaveholding church, binds thousands of ministers not to obey the Saviour, in going into all the world to preach his gospel. The abolitionists of the north do well to prate about their anti-slavery, their love for the slave, after binding themselves by a covenant never to preach to them glad tidings, the opening of the prison doors, and the acceptable year of the Lord, though Providence should open the way so to do. This provision is one of the most remarkable acts on record, and will burn the brands of infamy deeper and deeper into the characters of those who passed it, while their memories live. And strange to tell, there were 147 votes for this covenant to disobey Christ, and only 22 against it. Not a single voice was against it from New England or New Hampshire conferences; and but 19 in all from the free States, three of the 22 being from the Baltimore conference. I esteem this act more dishonoring to God, if possible, than a connection with slavery; but the northern church is in for both, and on decidedly more unchristian grounds than she was ever before the division.

The second resolution provides “that ministers, local and travelling of every grade and office, may remain in the northern church, or, *without blame*, attach themselves to the church south. This acknowledges the southern church as equally Christian with that of the north; for were it not so, ministers would be blameable for

going from a better to a worse. This passed by a vote of 139 to 17.

The third resolution recommends, for the concurrence of the annual conferences, an alteration of the sixth prospective rule, so to enable the church south, to get an equal proportion of the book concern and chartered fund. This passed by a vote of 147 to 12.

The ninth resolution relinquishes all claim of the M. E. church to the meeting-houses, parsonages, seminaries, colleges, school and conference funds, in the bounds of the southern church.

From these several actions it appears that the general conference fully agreed for the north to separate and form a distinct church ; and that if the south should go off, they should go full-handed. All the church property in the south was given up in favor of a southern organization ; and by a vote of 117 to 12 it was agreed that they should have their full share of the book concern and chartered fund, if the annual conferences consent. I have been particular in the examination of this point, to prove, beyond a doubt, that the north fully consented to let the south form a new church ; that the Louisville convention was fully authorized by the general conference of 1844 to do what it did do ; that it was, in no proper sense of the term, either disorderly or schismatical ; that the division was by mutual consent ; and that the church south, can rightfully claim all the guarantees given them in the twelve resolutions, which provided prospectively for said organization. The convention kept " strictly within the records."

The required majorities of the several annual conferences, did not concur in the recommendation to alter the restrictive rule, to let the southern church have their proportion of the book concern and chartered fund : but they may do it yet : some think they will, but I have no expectation that it will be done. As the matter now stands, these concerns with their vast wealth, belong exclusively to the northern church. Some of the northern conferences refused, because of the provision binding the ministers in the north never to " attempt " to form societies in the bounds of the church south, or exercise any pastoral duties there. But this point was not sent down to the annual conferences for their action, but was settled by the general conference, and therefore formed no reason for their action, unless it was to prevent this monstrous thing by defeating the southern organization, as the south might not leave unless they could get their share of these concerns. But they have left without their dividend ; and this odious provision stands in full force, and the northern church is bound to abide by it—bound by a vote of 147 to 12.

The last thing claiming attention is the influence of the separation on the subject of slavery. It has been confidently asserted by a number of Episcopal Methodist preachers, that the northern church is now free from any connection with slavery. Indeed, from what I have been able to learn, they generally make this

come to the north, as they would get a share of the \$900 or \$1000 which go to the Annual Conferences of the northern church, to aid in making up the scanty support of the preachers, which is often below the small allowance of the discipline. Thus all have strong and powerful motives to come to the north; while only a very small minority of the travelling preachers have any motive at all to remain in the southern church.

The border conferences and societies are in a position to induce the northern church to make effort to gain them over; to do which she must yield her professed opposition to slavery. This is obvious; and in the very same proportion that she will be influenced to make proselytes, she will be influenced to give up her apparent opposition to slavery; for this must be done, before the other can be done; and by all that the North will be tempted to swell her numbers, enlarge her borders, and extend her dominions South, she will be tempted to abate her opposition to slavery. And it is almost certain she will yield to this powerful temptation, and slaveholding go unrebuked in both churches. There are many more chances that the division will promote the interest of slavery, than it will favor the cause of freedom. There is little or no hope for the slave in this mighty division.

“Coming events (often) cast their shadows before,” and the bodies of future events are already seen by the shadows. The Providence annual conference at its session since the convention, passed the following resolutions, with only four dissenting votes:

“1. *Resolved*, That we are satisfied with the discipline of the church as it now is, on the subject of slavery; and as we have never proposed any alteration in it, neither do we now; and that in connection with our brethren of other conferences, we will ever abide by it.

“2. *Resolved*, That we have entire confidence in the anti-slavery character of our brethren of the Baltimore conference; that we greatly rejoice that they stand where they have ever stood, upon true Methodist ground; that we deeply sympathize with them in all their trials, which have arisen out of their resolution to maintain their integrity; and that we pledge ourselves to abide by them in their support of Methodism, as transmitted to us by the fathers.”

Hence we have the position of the most orthodox New England Episcopal Methodist anti-slavery. The position of the very heart. No change in the discipline on the subject of slavery; never did want any. The discipline “as it is.” No objections to the provisions which allow members and local preachers to hold slaves; to buy and to sell slaves, (if they do not engage in a general slave trade; they are not allowed to buy and sell “men, women and children,”) and travelling preachers to do the same thing, where the laws of the State forbid emancipation, which is in by far the greater number of the States. This is all right, just as it should be. They want no change in any of these respects; never did

want any ; local preachers and members may hold as many slaves as they want, buy and sell, where, when and to whom they please, if they stop short of buying and selling men, women and children ; and travelling preachers may do the same in the greater part of the slave States. The anti-slavery character of the Baltimore conference is just the thing. New England wants no better anti-slavery. The conference stands, and ever has stood on the true Methodist ground. The members of the church in that conference hold slaves, and buy and sell slaves ; I knew one who owned about 70. The local preachers own slaves ; I knew one who owned about 60. This is true Methodist anti-slavery ground. New England anti-slavery being judge, by this it is pledged to stand, and ask no change. It is true that conference would not let Mr. Harding be a travelling preacher, unless he free his slaves, because he lived in Maryland, where he could emancipate them ; but they made him a local preacher, in possession of his slaves. This is Methodism, "as transmitted to us by the fathers," by which the Providence conference is pledged to abide.

Was this the anti-slavery of the New England conference in 1839, when they wanted the general rule so altered as to make slaveholding a term of membership ? And of the great anti-slavery convention of 1843, which resolved that if the general conference of 1844 did not entirely separate the church from all connection with slavery, it would be no longer a home for anti-slavery Methodists ? How are the mighty fallen ! The Providence conference have given up every particle of modern abolitionism they ever had ; and have measured their whole length to the pro-slavery of the discipline—have sanctioned all the extreme South asks, with one exception, a slaveholding bishop. And what this conference has done, others will very likely do. Dr. Bond thinks that all the New England conferences will take the same grounds ; and if so, there will not be a particle of abolition proper in the Northern church. There is not half as much as there was one year since ; and it is almost certain that it will continue to decrease, for the reason previously given ; and if so, the separation will remove from Episcopal Methodism all the anti-slavery it ever had, and let the great weight of this great religious connection rest on the neck of God's crushed poor. To this conclusion we seem to be irresistibly brought by the facts in the case.

In view of all these facts and reasonings, and the conclusions to which they irresistibly bring us, what is the duty of anti-slavery Methodists ? Many of them have felt and said that they could not, without violating the plain commands of God, remain in church fellowship with slaveholders any longer than there was a reasonable prospect of removing them from the church. Now that there is no reasonable prospect of doing this, and no prospect at all, and a reasonable, if not certain prospect, that the church will be far less anti-slavery in sentiment and feeling than formerly, will these

declaration. But the facts previously noticed, prove that these preachers are either very ignorant or very dishonest, for they affirm what is most palpably untrue. Many think that the northern church, being now separated from that portion of the south which is most zealous in the defence of slavery, and in connection with the portion which admits it to be an evil, wrong in some sense, will from the nature of their position, become more and more anti-slavery, until she become fully abolitionised ; and then slavery will be removed from her pale. This theory looks plausible at first sight, and no one would rejoice more than the writer should this be the case. But he cannot shut his eyes to the evidence, which shows plainly that the very opposite will be the effect ; that the tone of anti-slavery will become less and less in the northern church. That this is far the more probable, will appear from the following considerations :

The spirit of rivalry between the two divisions will soon spring up. This will certainly be the case. The spirit of rivalry will lead to proselyting. Effort will be made to hold up these rival establishments. A spirit of discontent is already manifest in Kentucky, Holston and Missouri Conferences ; and propositions have been started for a convention of the laity, friendly to remaining in the northern church ; and the northern papers are urging them on, promising to supply those who may adhere to the north with ministers. The four Conferences on the line, Virginia, Holston, Kentucky and Missouri, have a right to attach themselves to the northern church ; and there are powerful motives to induce them to do so. The societies and stations on the south side of the line have a right to come to the northern church. Just before the convention, one of the stations in Louisville took up a vote on the subject of division, and only four in the whole station were in favor of it. Now that the division has taken place, it is not likely that that station will continue with the south. Be that as it may, their position gives hope to the north, that they may come over ; and this is the case with very many other societies on the same side of the line. There has been a large meeting of the members in St. Louis, which condemned the convention and denounced their preacher and P. E. who were members of it, for separating from the north. The meeting was a very spirited one, and called out the preachers in defence of their course. The position of these Conferences, societies and stations, will induce the northern church to enlarge the border—will be a constant temptation to her to extend her territory further south. And there are many and strong inducements for these societies, stations and conferences to come north. The northern church, as the matters now stand, and will continue to stand, in all probability, has the book concern and the charter fund. The proceeds of these are equally divided among the Annual Conferences, to aid in making up the salaries of the preachers, and other claimants. When the writer was con-

nected with the M. E. church, each Annual Conference received from these sources between five and eight hundred dollars every year, and there has been no falling off since. Now that thirteen Conferences are cut off, the dividend must be larger, say from \$700 to \$900. The amount, or at least \$600, would be obtained annually by any of those four Conferences which might come to the north. This is a strong motive, and will have its influence. The northern is the larger and most powerful division, and will claim to be the old church, the M. E. church; and the brand of seceders will be stamped on the southern division. The northern will be the larger, the wealthier and more influential of the two; and will claim to be the old church, bearing the scars of wounds received in holy warfare; and the trophies of their former great victories. These, with her mighty book room and chartered fund, will form attractions the most powerful. And these things can and will be used as means of proselyting and extending the northern church south, as of right it may be done, by the terms of division.

But it may be argued, as an offset to all this, that the southern church will give the slaveholders better security for the quiet possession of their slaves. I answer, the question of slaveholding, except in case of bishops, is not the question at issue. The discipline has always guaranteed to the slaveholder a right to hold his slaves; and to *buy* and *sell* slaves, since 1808. Mark this! The members and the local preachers have the very same right to hold and to buy and to sell slaves in the northern church, as they have in the southern one; and can have no more motive, from this consideration, to remain with the south. And this is true of travelling preachers, also, where the laws of the States prohibit emancipation. A travelling preacher in the South Carolina or Georgia Conferences, would have the very same rights and privileges, in the northern church, he has in the southern. The only difference is this; a travelling preacher, in those States which admit of emancipation, could not hold slaves; giving to the decision in the case of the Rev. Thomas S. Harding its most extensive application; nor could a slaveholder in any of the States be bishop. But local preachers may hold them, even in the Baltimore Conference; for that Conference gave Mr. Harding a location with his slaves—made him a local preacher, with his slavery.

These exceptions will be likely to influence none but those who are affected by them; and there is not more than one in every hundred of the preachers who can have any hope of ever becoming a bishop; and there is not one in four who holds slaves or has any reasonable prospect of ever owning slaves. Of the 1313 travelling preachers in the southern church, there are but about 200 who own slaves; less than one in six. These, a very small minority of preachers, are the only persons who have any inducements to remain with the South; and even these have motives to

persons continue in her fellowship? If they do, their sun must set in blackness. I would say to all anti-slavery Methodists, into whose hands this tract may fall, the time for decisive action has at length come. You were first promised deliverance from your sinful connections with slaveholders, by the general conference of 1844; and secondly by the Louisville convention; both are over, and your position is far worse than it was before the first met; you are not only connected with slavery in the very way you formerly were, but belong to a church whose ministers are bound by a solemn covenant never to preach the gospel to the slaves of five-sixths of the United States; and all your influence and support must go to support both of these great wrongs. Can you continue any longer in connection with slavery? Can you continue in such a connection and be guiltless before God? You cannot; you know you cannot; your own heart tells you you cannot; you must come out; you must obey God, if you have to do as Abraham did when he left his kindred; you must obey God or perish. To you, my dear brethren, this is an awful subject, and I feel unutterable things while I write. May the gracious and merciful Saviour give you grace and power to do right, and to do it at the right time, the only time it can be done, is the sincere prayer of the writer.

CLOSING REMARK BY THE PUBLISHER.

The M. E. church is now divided, but both parts are as pro-slavery as ever. Both divisions are satisfied with the discipline *as it is*. The discipline tolerates slavery, and always has. And, besides, the northern M. E. church propose to keep in all the slaveholders they can. One of the strongest abolition conferences (the Providence) is *entirely satisfied* with the Baltimore Conference, which has always tolerated slavery in its membership and local ministry. Dr. Bond, Abel Stevens, and other M. E. editors, contend for all the slaveholders on the border line, that they can get. There is no intention on the part of the M. E. church North, to exclude slaveholders from the church. Dr. Bond and Dr. Bangs advocated in the Christian Advocate and Journal for January of the present year, the re-union of the church North and South, at least, so far as the Book concern and Missionary operations are concerned. The M. E. church, therefore, has not lost a drop of her pro-slavery blood by division. Expediency, not principle, caused the division. The North is still as a whole, pro-slavery to the *core*. Both North and South, the slaveholder will still find an asylum in the M. E. church. Hence former reasons still exist in all their strength for SECEDING FROM THE NORTHERN M. E. CHURCH!